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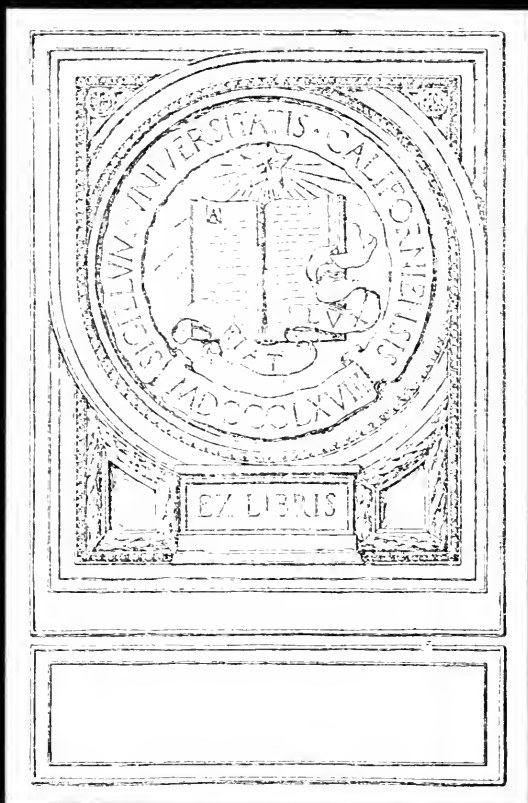
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A
VOYAGE
TO
ST. PETERSBURG
IN
1814,
WITH REMARKS
ON
THE IMPERIAL RUSSIAN NAVY.

BY
A SURGEON IN THE BRITISH NAVY.

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P R E F A C E.

AS the subject of the power of Russia has lately attracted considerable attention, as well as excited some, perhaps, imaginary fears among us ; and, as this power can be directed against England, in case of any misunderstanding, only by means of her navy, it may not be uninteresting to give some idea of what materials this mighty engine is composed, and how far it is likely to be wielded against us, with effect.*

This information I was enabled to gain in the very bosom of the supposed danger,—that is, on board one of their eighty-gun ships, during a six weeks' stay and voyage, not merely as a spectator, but as an active officer, in discharge of my professional functions. The occasion it will be necessary to mention. When the Russian fleet quitted Sheerness, in 1814, the Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Tate, was directed to embark the Imperial Guards, then in France, for conveyance home ; but the Emperor, or some one about him, recollecting the mortality frequently prevailing in their fleet, and that this might be increased by crowding together so many additional men, requested, through the medium of the Russian Ambassador, that a certain number of the medical officers of the British Navy might proceed in the Squadron, in order, by their more extensive experience, to obviate this danger.

* Written in 1817, shortly after the appearance of Sir Robert Wilson's Pamphlet on this subject.

VOYAGE,

&c.

IN the beginning of June I joined the S——, a noble ship, mounting nearly 90 guns, and bearing the flag of Rear Admiral O——, at Sheerness, or rather at the great Nore, where seven or eight sail were at anchor. The Admiral, who was a North Briton, received me very politely. He was decorated with the cross of St. George, if not the highest, as high as any honorary distinction in the country, and granted, I am told, to those only who have distinguished themselves by a very eminent degree of personal bravery in battle. The occasion, it seems, was against the Swedes, when being in command of a small vessel as lieutenant, he resolutely attacked a ship of that nation more than double his own force, and after a long and desperate engagement, succeeded in carrying her into Cronstadt, his own vessel sinking immediately after the battle.

He is married in Russia, and has been above twenty-five years in the service. Like all the other English officers belonging to it, he was ordered to reside at Moscow during the war with England; four or five of their ships were commanded on this occasion by our countrymen. I know not whether professional views and long estrangement from his native land may not, in some degree, have blunted the more delicate feelings of national glory: for, on mentioning accidentally in conversation, the attack and capture of some Russian gun-boats in the gulph of Finland, a few years ago, by Captain (now Admiral) Sir Byam Martin, he did not seem to recollect the circumstance; he expressed a doubt whether English seamen could ever, on equal terms, conquer those of Russia. This, however, is an excusable feeling, naturally arising from regard to the honour of the service to which he belongs. Let me add also, that he is a very correct officer and a worthy man.

Captain R——, second in command, was a Russian, and was likewise attentive to me, so far as an irritable temper, added to a nervous, anxious, hypochondriacal turn of mind, would permit. He was one of the strangest characters I ever met with, being a compound of extremes: sometimes very active and very indolent,

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very good-humoured and very peevish, very communicative, and very reserved; now quarrelling with his superior from perverseness, now courting him with more than due obsequiousness. He had lived in England for two or three years previous to the present time, and spoke our language nearly as well as myself. All our peculiarities were familiar to him, but the faults infinitely more so than the virtues. Sometimes he admired us, and at others thought there was no just ground for admiration: the most opposite opinions came out every moment. There was no knowing what sentence would follow from what preceded it, as keen invective always accompanied the warmest approval; his mind, like the vane at his ship's mast head, was never for an instant steady, but wavering with inconceivable rapidity. With all this, he was a man of considerable talents, much reading, and extensive information. There was only one thing in which he was constant—an immoderate partiality for physic. He was scarcely ever, according to his own account, well, though I could not once discover his disease; but this proved of no consequence, so long as a constant supply of potions promised to attack it in some way or other. For several minutes he would descant eloquently on the advantages to their service from the presence of the British medical officers; then turn round, with an expression of wonder, how the Emperor, or the people about him, could so grossly insult their own. In a moment more, he would say that the latter knew nothing, being only fit to physic horses; and in the same breath add, that our services were by no means necessary. He was, in short, quite a character for the stage—the very essence of odd fellows, among whom he would have been hailed as the prince of their craft.

The officers were, in general, very gentleman-like young men, nearly all of the first families, and most of whom, as well as Captain R——, spoke correct English. A much greater pleasure was, to find in the ward-room mess a Mr. S——, an English naval officer, whose society proved not a little gratifying among so many persons to whose language, manners, habits, and feelings, I was an utter stranger.

In a few days we reached the Downs, and in another week cast anchor in the port of Cherbourg, a harbour formed rather by art than by nature, but to which France has always attached much importance, from lying directly opposite to Portsmouth. It is an open bay, exposed to much of the violence of the ocean, till an artificial barricade, similar to our breakwater at Plymouth, was thrown across two-thirds of its mouth, to form a refuge for their men of war. This stupendous undertaking was perhaps the greatest public work ever undertaken by that country. The idea was magnificent, but the execution has proved far inferior

to the conception; for, after exercising the ingenuity of the ablest men of the nation, and draining the country of enormous sums, it in a great measure failed. In 1791, a new plan was adopted of casing over the old dike formed of small stones, with large blocks of stone for the distance of 1950 fathoms, intending batteries to be erected on the summit. In 1803, the centre of this embankment had been carried above high water mark, where a fortification being built, soldiers were stationed: but in 1809, a terrible storm carried away works, soldiers, artisans, and labourers, to the bottom of the sea; dashing two or three vessels, lying in the roads, to pieces on the beach, and leaving scarcely a trace of the breakwater to be seen at high water. Since that time, nothing more has been attempted with it; the dike, such as it is, protecting the roads pretty well, but at low water, presenting only a shapeless mass of ruins. Two or three works insulated by the sea guard the entrance. These, it has been supposed by some of our dashing naval characters, would not be difficult to carry by assault, by a determined commander, who should at once run alongside them. On the main, however, at the bottom of the harbour, are one or two heavy works, mounting two or three tier of guns, which would probably render the possession of the others nugatory.

A canal from the bottom of the bay runs to a capacious wet dock in the heart of the town, where lay a great number of fine merchant vessels, principally, I was informed, West Indiamen; which, on account of the war with England, had not been at sea for many years.

Cherbourg is a very ancient place; the houses of all shapes, proportions, and sizes, from quite modern, to the reign, I should conjecture, of Charlemagne. I never saw any thing more ruinous than in some of the streets near the market. The style of building also is peculiar, consisting of bows projecting from the upper stories, and fearfully overhanging the base in a line which has long forsaken the perpendicular, and many of which momentarily threatened to tumble to pieces.

The streets, which are commonly narrow, were crowded with Russian soldiers, the companions of our intended voyage, lounging leisurely along in great coats, offering, in the steadiness of their gait, a striking contrast to the activity and bustle of the French. All the shops were crowded, as well as the lower class of wine-houses, retailing the "veritable eau de vie" to their northern conquerors: while the better sort were nearly as well filled by their officers, and not a few of our countrymen, eagerly gulping champaign at six francs the bottle. The bargains between the natives and the soldiers were frequently amusing. The Russian usually offered one-fourth of what was demanded,

upon which the seller, commonly a female, fell into a rage, abusing him and his country with great volubility, not a word of which he understood; though the meaning was obviously intelligible to him. Careless of this, he commonly seized the article, half jocularly, half seriously; when, after another storm of words, a little advance being made upon the first offer, he walked off in triumph with the prize. So profitable has this intercourse been to the natives, that though their national pride seemed sorely galled by the presence of the Russians, I question whether many more of them would not be very quietly received for the sake of the pecuniary advantages.

The troops to be embarked in the fleet consist of some light troops, artillery, and the three principal regiments of guards, namely, the Paeobraginsky, Ismaeloffsky, and Semenowsky, originally formed, by Peter the Great, of young noblemen, in lieu of the turbulent Strelitzes. The former takes precedence of all others in the service, being raised and particularly favoured for its services in a trying situation, and of course forms an object of ambition to all the young men of family. The Ismaeloffsky, at the battle of Borodino, went into action 2,200 strong; of whom, one of the officers informed me, there came out no more than 130 alive and unhurt!

To these regiments the Emperor, it seems, pays unremitting attention; all the official reports relative to them, whether from the commanding officers, adjutants, surgeons, or others, being made to him in person. He can, likewise, call nearly all the privates by name. A gigantic Pole, a private, something exceeding seven feet high, belonging to the Paeobraginsky, is said to be a great favourite. He had served all the campaigns since the regiment quitted Petersburg, and had more than once been publicly commended for his conduct by the Emperor himself. Judging from appearances, he had not forgotten more substantial rewards; for, in going on shore with me at Deal, some time afterwards, he exhibited his pockets literally stuffed with gold rings, seals, chains, and necklaces, to barter for English goods, gleaned from a jeweller's shop, no doubt, during the campaign.

These regiments are fine looking men,—not only soldiers for show, if this be any recommendation, but as effective in the field as handsome on the parade. Being selected from a whole nation on account of personal stature, they form a contrast to the other soldiers and sailors of the country, who are commonly under what we consider the middle size, though strong active men. On the parade every evening in Cherburg, they extracted admiration even from the French, who crowded in great numbers to hear their bands, which were equal to the finest I ever heard.

On the fifth day after anchoring, 600 men of the Paeobraginsky

embarked with us, along with their band, which frequently cheered many an hour of the subsequent voyage by "discoursing most eloquent music." Along with them, likewise, came the Commander-in-Chief, General Baron Rosen, an accomplished and rather handsome man: and if honours be a proof of merit, a brave and distinguished soldier, his breast being covered almost two deep with stars and orders, Russian, Prussian, Austrian, and Bavarian, gained in the field since the commencement of the war with France. He was still but a young man, not more perhaps than thirty-six, of such gentleman-like demeanour and prepossessing manners, that both officers and men seemed not merely to love but to idolize him. The regard too seemed mutual: an instance of it may be mentioned. The officers of course, on embarking, joined the naval mess in the ward-room, preparations being made at the admiral's table for the reception of the general, who, however, politely declined the invitation, in order to continue with his old companions in arms—"I have marched and lived with my officers from Petersburg to Paris; and though obliged by your kind offer, Admiral, I cannot think of separating from them now."

We remarked the majority of the officers to be very young men, several not more than twenty years old; and, with three or four exceptions, none exceeding six or eight and twenty. These we could not consider the veterans who had worsted Napoleon; but soon heard an explanation of the reason, in the losses sustained during the campaigns, which were necessarily supplied by more inexperienced levies. They were, however, as well as most of the naval officers, perfect gentlemen. Several were perfecting themselves in French, and possessed a large stock of the literature of that nation. Two only spoke English, and the only English book I could find was Sir Robert Kerr Porter's account of the campaign of 1812, which, however, belonged to one of the naval officers.

From Deal, which we reached in about a week more, the General and two or three others made a forty-eight hours' excursion to London, the report of which was by no means so gratifying as a sanguine Briton commonly expects. The charges were unconscionable—the cookery not to their taste—the post-boys insolent—the towns inferior to the French—and London dirty and smoky. But then, some of the buildings were certainly fine—the Horse-Guards seemed fine soldiers—and the English were, unquestionably, an opulent and spirited people. The size, the brilliant audience, and magnificence of Drury-lane Theatre, astonished them. Above all, the frail and loquacious tenants of the lobbies created the greatest surprise; for Paris, the devout

object of all their affection, they willingly admitted, possessed no such scene as this.

It is remarkable, however, how much higher every thing French stands in their estimation than almost any thing English. I am at a loss to account for this, except it be that happy talent, possessed by our lively neighbours in an eminent degree, of raising admirers out of professed and conquering enemies. But the praise of superiority was not awarded in their favour without many long arguments on the side of our country by some of the naval officers. A few of these, who had resided in England, took a more favourable view of our manners, institutions, and national character; yet, even they, were strongly prejudiced in favour of France. I more than once regretted to some of the parties, that these debates being carried on in Russian, I had not the opportunity of explaining or defending what might seem to them peculiar in our habits. The reply was, that the circumstance was very fortunate, for I should be little pleased with the opinions expressed of my country.

The difference of the *esprit du corps* between the army and navy is obvious. The former know and feel the value, not only of their late services, but of their usual weight in the country: the latter appear to labour under a feeling of inferiority, as if aware they were only a lower link in the chain of national power. Several of the lieutenants regretted they had no means of acquiring distinction, compared with the army; and two even thought of relinquishing the service of Neptune for that of Mars—of surrendering the spy-glass and speaking-trumpet (the usual insignia of their office) for the sash and feather. Yet their contests with the Turks and Swedes were often referred to with pride, as a proof of what they could do when put to the trial. Even the English navy, it was hinted, possessed no superiority which might not be hazarded by a contest with that of Russia. You will smile—but a little vanity on points of national distinction is excusable. Nay, Captain R— once asked me, what other motive was it, if not fear, which prevented Lord Collingwood attacking the Russian fleet, going from Corfu to Venice, in 1807? The only reply was,—how came their fleet, not merely to run away, but to allow a seventy-four to be destroyed before their eyes by two English ships of the same force, under Sir Samuel Hood? He was so enraged as not to speak to me for two or three days after.

The “Guards,” I soon found, were every thing on board; the comforts of the seamen, the rules of the service, and all previous arrangements, being—nothing. Their name, their services, their wishes, and the magical word “Emperor,” was an excuse

for every thing; even Captain R—— forgot his usual perverseness when they were in question.—“We manage these things better in England.”

On first joining the ship, a spacious cabin, the ward-room, was assigned me; but when the all-important “Guards” made their appearance, the Captain, after more than usual politeness, and a hundred apologies, said, that as the officers were of the first consequence, being noblemen, and enjoying the particular favour of the Emperor, it would be necessary for me to share my cabin with two, as the other officers would be equally burthened. This honour a novice in sea affairs must have submitted to. I, however, was too old a sailor, being well aware of the nuisance of having a raw landsman or two so near me in case of boisterous weather, added to another reason to be mentioned presently. I therefore parried the blow, by requesting to have the honour of resigning it to them altogether, on condition of having a screen cabin fitted up for me on the main deck. This settled, Mr. S——, who had been hitherto indifferently accommodated, and I, took possession of our new sleeping-room, living of course still at the ward-room mess; and during the passage, which lasted about three weeks, from Deal to Cronstadt, enjoyed all the air, comfort, and cleanliness, so necessary to Englishmen; but which, as I had conjectured, did not seem absolutely essential to my intended messmates of the “Guards.”

The other circumstance to which I allude, is not merely the general neglect of personal cleanliness common to most foreigners, but a peculiar characteristic of it, namely, the presence of certain *creeping things*, which with us are considered to be confined to the lowest and idlest objects of the most squalid poverty. I had suspected something of this kind before, when, one day at dinner, my servant pointed out two large and thriving members, crawling up the shoulder of a naval officer who sat next me. This, however, might have been supposed the effect of accident, had not a similar occurrence taken place more than once afterwards; and matted and uncombed heads were obvious every morning in all classes, from the highest to the lowest. Among the seamen this nuisance prevails to an extent surprising and disgusting in the extreme, arising from the utter disregard of the officers to their comforts and cleanliness. I did not observe it to the same extent among the troops, though, on board at least, they were not more looked after than the seamen. It may be perhaps from their servants, who necessarily mix with the crew, that the officers derive their obnoxious live stock; but even in this way the fact is disgraceful to their system, or rather no system, of discipline.

Another occurrence, accidental indeed, but happening nearly about the same time as the former, spoiled my dinner a second

time, and would have given a stranger, though erroneously, a very unfavourable impression of the decorum of the table. A young military officer, adorned with several orders, as most of them were, came on board at Deal from another ship, to see a beloved friend, when having taken rather large potations of *cogniac*, his head and stomach both seemed to feel the effects; for, on rising before our repast was concluded, to take farewell of his friend by kissing him, as is customary, in inclining his head over his shoulder, the stomach dislodged its contents, which came streaming over dishes, plates, and persons, for nearly a yard in every direction. Fortunately, I was out of reach of this shot. The poor offender, covered with confusion, quickly made his escape; the other officers were extremely annoyed by the effect such an event would have in our eyes, and made numberless apologies for it, which, however, were scarcely necessary, as it was mere accident, and could not detract from their general manners, which were not only decorous, but characterized by great freedom from the vice of drunkenness.

In justice also to their finer feelings I must confess I never saw men possess stronger mutual regards or warmer friendships. They always met with enthusiasm, and often parted with tears. Sometimes it almost reminded me of a tragedy scene, except in not being fictitious. Many of the striplings of the army had their relations in the fleet whom they had not seen since the commencement of the war, and among these the extravagance of joy seemed so blended with the "luxury of woe," that it was difficult to tell which predominated. The custom of kissing when meeting or separating, is universal. It is the cheek however that is saluted; but nothing can reconcile it to an Englishman among persons of the same sex. The Swedes, Danes, French, and others, partially practice the same custom; and it is another proof of our dissimilarity from most other nations, in minute as well as in great points, that this peculiarity has never existed among us.

While lying in the Downs, I had a proof that the skill of their medical men was not a great deal underrated by Captain R—. The Russian surgeon, I should premise, was by no means deficient in intelligence, though young and inexperienced; abounding in theory, but utterly deficient in practical knowledge; and a favourite dogma strongly imbibed and retained was, that all evacuations were hurtful. A seaman, during my temporary absence on shore, fell overboard into a boat, and pitching on his head, experienced concussion of the brain. On returning some hours afterwards, the first insensibility had gone off, and inflammation threatened rapid progress. I recommended him to be bled, when, after much persuasion, a small quantity was taken

from the arm. This, however, was evidently of little use, and the danger seeming imminent, I insisted on the temporal artery being opened. He had already made sad work of the simple operation of opening a vein; but attempting an artery proved so alarming, that after an effort or two he fairly gave it up to me; and when the blood had issued a moment or two in its usual jerking manner, actually went off to report to the captain that I should inevitably kill the man, who sent down a lieutenant to see whether I was not committing murder! The man's life, however, was saved by this measure; but had he chanced to die, I should unquestionably have been considered a homicide. The circumstances attending this case are only one specimen of several similar scenes.

A singular circumstance, characteristic of the hardy nature of Russian seamen, occurred nearly about the same time. A man complained, at nine o'clock in the morning, of being unwell, and at three was dead—not from any sudden cause, as might be supposed, but from the regular progress of disease. He was affected with scurvy, and proved also in the last stage of inflammation of the lungs, having, it was ascertained by inquiry, laboured under the latter ten days, without making his complaint known to any one. During this time he continued doing his duty, occasionally suffering taunts from his companions for being lazy; nor was it till almost the very instant in which life was preparing to quit her tenement for ever, the unfortunate man applied for medical assistance,—an instance perhaps of unexampled fortitude under acute disease.

Besides my other duties I had a new office to perform, connected, in their opinions probably, with my profession. It was that of carver-general to the mess. For having on first coming on board displayed some skill, unwittingly, in this respect, my services were afterwards put in constant requisition. You will judge this was no ordinary labour, when I state, that after the military came on board, we sat down to table thirty-five persons, not one of whom, singular as it may appear, could dissect poultry *secundum artem*; but, when accidentally before them, haggled it most cruelly into quarters, or rather sixths, as some ancient tyrants punished their victims, by tearing the unfortunate subject to pieces by main strength. But it was not poultry alone—beef, mutton, hams, in short, every thing that came to table was ordered under the operation of my knife. One day's work will give you some idea of my labours. First came a huge round of beef, which, in order to supply so many hungry mouths, I found it necessary to slice from top to bottom; next, a tremendous ham, every cut of which excited regret that people made their pigs of such a size; afterwards, two couple of fowls, or ducks, the sight

of which made my hand involuntarily tremble; and lastly a goose which, particularly when characterized by the honours of age, fairly made me groan in spirit.

Without the least exaggeration I may say that the skin was more than once grazed from my fingers (not very hard at any time) by this more than due share of tabular dissection. Innumerable compliments were paid to my skill, though not one to my patience, which, of the two, I fancied deserved it infinitely the most. But even praise could no longer stimulate exertion. My fame was established; and in imitation of other great men, I thought it no longer necessary to labour for superiority where there was no rival. I therefore laid down quietly, what few illustrious characters do, the sceptre of power, *i. e.* the carving-knife much to the regret of my admiring subjects, content to eat a lump of a fowl, for a joint was out of the question, rather than that the announcement of dinner should any longer give me a fit of the spleen.

It will naturally be asked, how it was possible to eat where there was so much work. This is easily explained, in the words of a certain Cornish parson, according to the story, who, when a wreck on the coast was announced to his congregation during divine service, and they were slyly moving off to secure the prize, bolted out of the pulpit with—"no foul play, gentlemen: let us all start fairly." In short, the meat being all cut before any one sat down, according to the Russian fashion, "we started fairly." The dishes being carried round by a servant, beginning at the head of the table, each person helps himself to what he likes best; those at the bottom, of course, seldom get the dainty bits, but the seats being commonly arranged according to rank, this does not produce so much grumbling as it would in an assembly of John Bulls.

The order of the dishes was likewise curious. First came the boiled beef; then a kind of *sahnagundi*, formed of corned meat cut small, with abundance of pepper, mustard, vinegar, and other things, and served up cold. This, from making its appearance every day, I concluded to be a national dish, but there was always some admixture in it not at all to my taste. The third article was soup, thus forming the middle, instead of, as with us, the beginning of dinner. Afterwards came the poultry, followed by the best pastry I ever ate any where, being light and extremely pleasant, instead of the heavy doughy masses of England, which lie in the stomach like so many grape-shot.

On the 5th July, quitted the Downs attended by an English hospital ship, with a physician to the fleet (Dr. Burnett) in order to secure the squadrons against the effects of contagious diseases, by removing the infected. These it appears were common on

board, even while the ships remained in the river Medway, requiring the constant inspection of English naval surgeons to guard against their spreading. What is more extraordinary, many of the crew, though living constantly on fresh meat and vegetables, were suffering from scurvy. This throws a new light, or rather confirms an old one, on the origin of the disease; showing that the neglect of personal cleanliness, damp air, and want of exercise, will produce it, totally independent of diet, though this is doubtless the strongest exciting cause.

Favoured by the alarm created by the sudden death of the poor man before mentioned, I succeeded in procuring permission from Captain R—— to muster the ship's company. This in their opinion seemed a novel and extraordinary proceeding, though practised daily in the British fleet. As I expected thirty men were found affected with symptoms of the scurvy; in another ship more than double the number suffered under similar complaints; others likewise experienced the disease in a greater or less degree, which but for this examination might have gone on to the last stage with impunity. Not one of the officers attended this inspection; such a thing in our navy would be considered the grossest neglect of duty, but in this is never thought of. The captain complained of being unable to walk from a pain in his knee, and no one else seemed to think it their concern. A single week only had elapsed at sea when these cases were discovered. What would become of such a fleet blockading an enemy's fort for ten or twelve months, or even proceeding on a moderate cruise?

My success in this measure encouraged another attempt for the twentieth time, to persuade the captain to a regular periodical examination of the crew twice or three times a week, which was followed as usual by a refusal, on account of its being contrary to the system of their service. A request to examine the guards, made him tremble at my temerity, the regimental surgeon, or surgeon-major as he was called, being on board. A hint of the propriety of the measure was however dropped to the general, who settled the affair by saying at once the health of the men was their affair alone and no other person's. Naval discipline therefore, affecting the welfare of a whole service, soldiers as well as sailors, was nothing against the will of a single military officer.

Hitherto I had tried by all my powers of argument and insinuation to point out, according to the spirit and letter of my instructions, a variety of minor measures, not merely of temporary but permanent benefit to the service in points connected with its general health. These were not very well received; on the contrary considered almost impertinent; and I began to be looked upon with an eye of suspicion, if not dislike, when my

wishes reaching the Admiral's ears, he sent for me, examined my instructions, and observed that however good in themselves, they were totally inapplicable to the Russian service. His advice was extremely friendly. "The people here are averse to innovation," said he, "take my advice; interfere as little as possible if you wish to be comfortable; give your assistance if requested but not otherwise;—I myself should wish to introduce many things, but I find it impossible. At the same time you are right in endeavouring to comply with the orders you received, but here they cannot be executed."

Our passage across the North Sea was perfectly tropical;—a fair gentle breeze, a glassy sea seldom ruffled, the ship with little motion, the heavens cloudless, the nights clear, the men basking in the sun during the day, the ports open for the admission of air day and night, and the band frequently sending forth their "concord of sweet sounds."—On the 11th of July rounded the extreme point of Jutland called the Scaw, and entered the Kattegat, or Scaggerac Sea, dividing the former from the coast of Sweden, and near the latter coast abounding in small islands. From the Scaw to Zealand it forms a remarkable elbow and preserves the same appellation. Above that island it takes the name of the Baltic, communicating together by the famous passage of the Sound, and the Great and Little Belts, in all of which channels our shipping were much damaged by the Danes during the war.

The weather still continued fine, the wind veering round in our favour, in the various and almost opposite points necessary to steer through this confined and dangerous sea, except once near the island of Anholt, under which we anchored. This island is the largest in the Kattegat, and belongs to Denmark, lying not more than nine miles from the coast of Jutland. It is dangerous to mariners, but contains a light house distinguishable fifteen miles off. During the war the light was extinguished by the Danes, in order to annoy our shipping, when it became necessary to reduce the island, which was occupied by a small British garrison. A desperate attempt to retake it was made from the coast of Jutland in 1811. The invaders however, after a sanguinary contest, were repulsed by a handful of men under Captain Maurice of the Navy, taking prisoners more than their own numbers, and the rest escaping with difficulty. Since that time, though often threatened, it continued quietly in our hands till the cessation of hostilities. It is however poor, not very populous, and only useful for the time, from its light-house and position.

The day after quitting Anholt we passed through the channel called the Greater Belt, Admiral Tate, the commander-in-chief, leading the way in a three-decker; Admiral Crown having pro-

ceeded the same way with another division of the fleet a week or two before. Entering the Gulph of Finland a few days afterwards, no event of consequence occurred till on the 29th of July the squadron cast anchor in the outer road of Cronstadt. Nothing unfavourable to health had occurred since the cases of scurvy. The sick list, considering the number of men on board, was not perhaps more than half what it would have been in an English ship of the same force. This arises from the crew seldom applying for medical assistance till seriously in want of it. Englishmen are not only more careful of themselves, and very properly so, but more tender in constitution. They could scarcely have existed at all under the general neglect, and personal filth, characterising these men, of which some idea may be formed when I state that, during my six weeks stay on board, many, I felt satisfied, had not once washed themselves, and not fifty out of the whole crew had beds to lie in, but strewed themselves round the decks to sleep, choosing, in the sea phrase, the softest plank they could find. Yet the ship herself was by no means dirty; the decks were constantly well cleaned, scraped and ventilated. Of a Russian sailor, therefore, it may be said as of a Dutchman, that he is the only dirty thing in his house.

Of the general nature of their service, and what probable danger we have to fear from it, a few words may not be unacceptable, particularly as the subject in the detail is little known in England.

Russia has ever had a longing inclination to become a first rate naval power, principally perhaps from considering herself too far removed from the centre of European politics to become imposing by land. It was this desire that actuated Peter in building St. Petersburg, and in forming Cronstadt into an arsenal for his navy, at a prodigious sacrifice of human life and treasure. The same spirit continued to influence his successors till lately; but from all appearances it is rapidly declining, from finding that by a series of extraordinary and unexpected events, Russia has acquired a preponderance by land among her more southern neighbours, never dreamt of even by the ambitious Catherine. There is another reason, no doubt, in the derangement of her finances, which will not admit of supporting a large naval as well as a large military establishment. A third reason is, that nature denies maritime pre-eminence by locking up her fleets nearly six months of the year by the ice. A fourth, and the greatest of all, is the difficulty of creating seamen, to which constant practice and experience are indispensable; for though a tolerable soldier may be made when out of the actual presence of an enemy, yet a sailor can learn his profession only by constantly grappling in person with the elements of sea and wind.

For the construction of shipping no country possesses more re-

sources within herself. Wood, workmen, hemp, iron, pitch, and tar she possesses in abundance and of the best description; while the ports of Cronstadt, Revel, Riga, and Archangel offer every facility for their equipment. The number of ships of the line does not amount to more than thirty, not more than half of which could proceed to sea for active service, and I saw several rotting on the stocks at Cronstadt. Of frigates and smaller vessels, as brigs and cutters, there are about the same number; while of gun-boats, carrying one or two twenty-four pounders and twenty or twenty-five men, intended to act in shoal water, and particularly useful against the Swedes, they can muster in the different ports and inlets of the Gulf of Finland one hundred and fifty. These vessels being either able to row or sail also become extremely annoying to the largest ships in a calm, where the latter cannot manœuvre. The Danes used them against us in the Belt, with great effect; and in the south of Europe, (viz. Algesiras) the Spaniards used them, to the frequent obstruction of our men-of-war, and loss of our merchant vessels.

But when all the materials which the country undoubtedly possesses are put together—when the wooden castle is constructed and sent into her element, the soul by which this mass requires to be animated is wanting. The want of clever seamen is a leading objection; but a still more vital deficiency, and one which Russia never can supply, whatever be her zeal or exertions, is the want of able officers. This deprivation presents greater obstacles to her naval greatness than even the other; for seamen by embarking in merchant vessels may acquire skill and experience; while young men of a certain rank in life would not submit to this drudgery, nor would their friends, for what they might deem a problematical advantage, permit it at the hazard of certain hardship, and probable loss of gentleman-like acquirements and manners.

At present the young aspirant after naval renown is placed in a kind of college, appropriated to the reception of this class at Cronstadt, or in another at St. Petersburg, at the age of seven or eight. Here he is taught the elements of navigation, and as the summer opens, is sent out for a few weeks cruise in the Baltic. During this time the weather is fine, no difficulty offers in the contention of the elements to call forth the powers of his mind. He visits a few ports for the purpose of amusement, and he returns again scarcely recovered from sea sickness, to Cronstadt or Revel, to be locked up by the ice for the winter, till the ensuing summer requires the same routine, with his illness to reconquer, and all his little knowledge to re-learn. In two or three years he becomes garde-marine, and afterwards midshipman; pursuing the same round of duty, gaining some insight into practical navigation, but scarcely any into the more important science of seamanship;

and while on shore in the winter, by a late regulation, officiating alternately as soldier and sailor.

During the cruize he scarcely ever deigns to superintend the immediate work of the seamen, or carry into effect the orders of the lieutenant; and seldom goes into a boat on duty, except when proceeding to the ship of the commander-in-chief. He simply walks the deck in his watch, and heaves the log to discover the rate of sailing. Below, he messes in the Ward Room with the lieutenants on his table money which, while in England, was £6 10s. per month, instead of fighting his way through the hardships of a cock-pit, like the English midshipman; and struts to and fro with a segar in his mouth, till the routine of duty returns. In due time the theory of a ship is learnt, the names of the ropes acquired, along with the words of command for setting and reefing and furling sails, but he understands little of the practice of either. When a difficulty occurs therefore he can rarely put the men right, though even exalted to the rank of lieutenant; for it is one thing to give orders, and another to know how they should be executed.

It is impossible that men brought up in this manner can ever command ships or fleets opposed to good seamen, without sustaining certain defeat. Personal courage, of which they undoubtedly possess their full share, can do little at sea, (less even than on land,) against superior skill. The mode of educating the officers of the British navy is, in every respect, different; and perhaps a stronger condemnation cannot be passed on the Russian. We have indeed a naval college also, but few of the midshipmen comparatively have been educated there;—those who have, it is remarkable, seldom make good seamen, on account of passing two or three years, out of the six, which it is necessary to serve, in the school, instead of being at sea fighting their way amid the rough preceptorship of winds and waves.

The want of good officers has always been so far felt and acknowledged, that allurements to foreigners, particularly the English, have been constantly held out to enter into the Russian navy. Two thirds of the admirals and captains sent to England in this fleet, were Scotchmen. These are good officers, and clever seamen, but the nature of the service, or the genius of the people is such, they are unable, with their utmost exertions, to introduce a single regulation of any kind, for its amelioration or improvement. Several accepted Russian commissions, red-hot with purposes of imparting to its navy all the advantages and new lights breaking in upon us in England; but to their mortification found they had been all attempted by their predecessors in vain. The intention indeed brings down such odium and abuse from the native officers, who consider any proposed alteration an insult to

their discipline or talents, that none can persist in the design, however high in rank, without being recalled from command, or receiving an order to conform to established usages from the court, where, as in all arbitrary governments, intrigue and favour often supersede the true interests of a country.

The jealousy entertained of the British officers is extremely great; so that though they have mainly contributed to, if not entirely gained, nearly all the sea victories of the country, they do not find much favour in the eyes of their Russian brethren. On inquiring the characters of some, Admiral T—— was represented a tyrant, without a single good quality out of his profession; Admiral E—— a fool and dotard; Admiral C—— a good seaman, but an arbitrary, vulgar man, fit only for a collier; and all the others with various deductions from their professional merits. Admiral O——, while I was on board, behaved to them with extreme reserve, rarely exchanging a word with any one but the Captain or Captain-Lieutenant. Neither did he ever ask them to dine as is customary in the English service. On this account he did not invite me, assigning as an apology to me for this seeming neglect, the jealousy likely to be produced from paying that attention to a countryman, which was not given to his own officers. For the same reason, he did not often enter into conversation. His situation seemed to be one where every action was examined for the purposes of invidious misrepresentation, or he thought so; most of his countrymen have indeed found it so, for it is but the natural result of exercising authority in a foreign service.

However severe the junior officers abused the British, it must be confessed they never pretended to exalt the qualifications of their own, all with the single exception of Admiral Siniavin, being represented to my repeated enquiries as possessing little or no acquaintance with their profession. Among these was Admiral T——, who commanded a division of the army on the retreat of the French, where he did not retrieve in a military capacity that credit which he was believed to want in naval matters. He possesses however, great address, it is said, and what is of more consequence, powerful interest; but the people have not yet forgiven him the escape of Napoleon.

Were it not for the protection of the government which, in this point, exercises a sound wisdom and discretion in opposition to national prejudice, few Englishmen would enter their service, and if the unpleasantness of the situation were fully known, perhaps none.—Many repent it, but having given up their prospects otherwise, find it too late to return. In 1805, proposals were made to English medical men, to enter the Russian fleet then in some of our ports. Several accepted the offer, but became so

disgusted with their situation, as to quit it after some years service, and not one now remains. Others who have tried their fortune, by settling in the country, even under the auspices and protection of government, soon found their prospects by no means equal to their expectations, and in general do not remain. Russia is too poor for an Englishman. A moderate exercise of talents and industry in his own country, will always gain him as much as perhaps great labour and anxiety there; a remark which holds good with respect to adventurers of every class to "All the Russias."

The Russian sailors possess all the requisites for becoming the first among their profession—courage, fortitude, patience, obedience, hardihood, and activity. A little experience makes them very smart in doing duty aloft in fine weather, as I witnessed; but they dread beyond almost any other place (the officers at least) the stormy and boisterous channel of England. No men can be better behaved; punishments are, strange to say! almost unknown, scarcely one having occurred in the S—— for two years; while in an English ship of the same size, there would probably have been, on a moderate computation, two hundred. And this orderly conduct seems entirely spontaneous, as they are in a great measure left to themselves, the officers seldom or never looking after their condition or comforts. They are likewise, contrary to what might be expected, commonly sober; during my stay on board, I saw only one man in a state of intoxication. The fortitude of the Russian under privations and disease, is extremely great; of the latter, I have already given an instance, but others were by no means uncommon. Of the former, numberless instances are on record, in serving for years without pay, promotion, honours, comforts, and almost without clothing, or wholesome food, and yet not uttering a murmur. The officers particularly boasted of their sacrifices in these respects, on many occasions during the wars of their country which, they said, Englishmen would never have submitted to.

The courage of the Russian seaman against an enemy is unquestionable, being of that description which rarely thinks of retreating or submitting, while able to act offensively; and it is this insensibility to danger, as we perhaps may term it, which gave the contests at sea with the Swedes frequently the character of the most desperate obstinacy. He will always fight while he can stand; the English system therefore of broadside and broadside fighting, commonly adopted against the French, would not perhaps answer so well against the Russians, though unquestionably our superior discipline, experience at sea, greater quickness in the management of the great guns, added to the entire interior arrangements of British men of war for battle, would secure the

victory even in this mode of engaging. It was however Lord Nelson's opinion they should be out-manceuvred. That great man saw their weak point in a moment, aware apparently that sheer hard blows would not be the speediest means of subduing them. At the same time it may be observed, their courage seems more of a passive than active character; it wants that fire and animal vivacity, capable of striking out new plans for destroying an enemy, or meeting the chances and accidents of naval warfare, which characterises the English, and even the French sailor. He has not in fact sufficient resources within himself for the exigencies of his situation, for much must often depend on the men, independent of all the skill of the officer. Experience alone, in situations of danger and difficulty, can at once point out wants and the best mode of supplying them.

Many of those embarked lately in the men of war consisted of raw levies, the national navy having declined much since the war with England, and many seamen being drafted to serve with the army in the late campaigns. Of marines, constituting so powerful and effective a part of our navy, they have none.—A certain number of seamen perform their duties, such as sentinels, guards, &c.; and in the winter the whole of the crews are lodged in barracks, drilled, paraded, numbered into battalions, and in every respect considered as soldiers, than which no more effectual plan could be devised for stifling any feeling of the *esprit du corps*; yet without this spirit no military service ever did, or ever can become distinguished. A thorough-bred English sailor is an animal of quite another cast. He is, perhaps, the proudest of men; for however laughable it may seem, he cannot believe there is another profession in the world equal, in any point of view, to his own; and above all things detests being assimilated to the situation of a soldier, so much so indeed, that it is utterly impracticable to train a body to act together in that capacity, and difficult even to teach them the manual exercise. The attempt always produces dissatisfaction, and frequently desertion from our ships, where it is much practised.

But the chief defect in Russian discipline is the want of proper superintendence by the officers, who while they survey the decks minutely, totally neglect the men. An English officer will be astonished when told they are never mustered for examination; they may shave or not shave, wash or not wash, change or not change their linen, as they please; and the shirt that goes on new, does in fact occasionally never come off till in rags! What is no less extraordinary, he is permitted to sleep about the decks, wet or dry, cold or warm, naked if he pleases, or wrapped in a great coat, without any other covering. Frequently he has neither hammock nor bedding, and, if he had, would probably not take the trouble of

suspending them; as all sailors' beds swing from the deck overhead: but strewing both any where, will throw himself carelessly down for the night; while his superiors, seem to have no more to do with him off duty, than if his existence was unknown.

The consequences of this singular neglect are the production of filth and vermin, to a disgusting degree; these added to cold, and exposure in sleeping, soon generate typhus fever, scurvy, and other disorders, which occasion great ravages, and in a long cruize would unman the fleet. To these peculiarities, may be added another destructive one, that of idleness when off duty in harbour, or during their watch below at sea. Instead of dancing, or amusing themselves by the rough but manly sports of English and French seamen, they are found squatting on the decks, playing at cards, or tearing thousands of living inhabitants from each others heads. Indolence is a well known exciting cause of scurvy, and this inaction, added to personal filth, no doubt caused the cases of that disease found in Sheerness harbour, though living, as before remarked, on fresh meat and vegetables. Besides these, there are a variety of other points, which require amendment, such as a better supply of clothing, more shirts and stockings, and stated days for washing them, when taken off; instead of which, there was not one appropriated to this purpose during my stay on board! Yet all seamen, if not naturally dirty, are extremely careless, and therefore require looking after more than most other men. Unfortunately, however, the Russian officer, though extremely mild in deportment, believes he has nothing more to do with those placed under him, than to issue the words of command in nautical evolutions, leaving every thing else to themselves. This is a fatal, but seemingly a fixed error, in their system of discipline. He ought to be more among his men, more identified with them; he should not merely wish them to do right, but shew them how to do it; and if necessary compel them to follow his directions; for it is unquestionable that it requires a stronger stimulus than his own inclination, to make a sailor take proper care of himself; and he is too valuable a defender of his country, to be either slighted or neglected by his superiors. The virtues of the Russian, are all his own; his faults those of his officers, or at least of their mode of discipline.

A stronger reflection upon the latter cannot, perhaps, be adduced, than to hint at that adopted in our own service, which, without any extraordinary vanity, may be considered among the best, if not the very best, in Europe, and followed also in every essential point, by the Americans. In the three great public duties of watching, fighting, and working the ship, every man knows his place with such precision, that though called up in the dead of night, he finds his station and his arms, even in the

largest ships in a moment. Bills, as they are called on board, or plans drawn up expressly for this purpose, on a large sheet, pasted on boards, and containing the names and duties of every individual seaman, are hung up round the decks, continually in view, so that the most stupid, or inattentive, can scarcely ever err through mistake; while the officers, for immediate reference, must each possess a copy. General orders direct that the crew shall be mustered for inspection, twice a week, in three or more divisions, according to the size of the vessel, under a lieutenant and several midshipmen. When the drum rolls therefore on Sundays and Thursdays, each repairs to the place allotted for his division, where drawn up in a line, he undergoes, not only a close examination in person and dress, but is compelled to bring his bag of spare clothing to be likewise inspected in detail, in order that none may be put by, either dirty or damp, deficient in number, or in want of repairs, or of being replaced. Twice a-week, consequently a sailor, in the Royal Navy must be clean, under pain of certain punishment. Nor is it scarcely possible for him to be otherwise at any time, so many eyes are upon him, such constant vigilance exerted by all classes of the officers. His bedding also, is subjected occasionally to a similar scrutiny; he has washing and airing as well as mustering days; he is never permitted to lie about the decks; the latter are cleaned and aired daily, with a degree of minuteness and nicety almost excessive, and which it may be safely affirmed, the most zealous housewife does not bestow upon her parlour. And besides these, there are a hundred other minute regulations tending to cleanliness, sobriety, and good order; while in the Russian Navy, scarcely one of these essential particulars is deemed a point of convenience, much less a necessary duty.

The grades in rank are principally taken from the French service; they are aspirant or volunteer, midshipman, lieutenant, captain-lieutenant, acquired after twelve or thirteen years service as lieutenant, but unknown in the British navy, captains of the first and second classes, commodore, rear, vice, and full admiral.

The actual pay of a lieutenant is about £50 per annum; but when in active service, he receives a certain sum as table money according to the station he is on; in England it was £6 10s.; on the coast of Sweden about £4 10s. per mensem, besides £4 0s. monthly for two servants; so that his income is considerably more than that of the English lieutenant. When not at sea, or actively employed, the table and servant's money ceases. A midshipman, as he messes with the lieutenants, receives the same sum for his table, but with smaller pay, and no allowance for servants. Captain-lieutenants have pay for three servants, captains for four and six, according to rank, and admirals in the same proportion.

The surgeons are very deficient in the essential qualifications of their profession; and some, it must be confessed, extremely ignorant, both of the powers and application of medicine, and of the operations of surgery. In the former, they seldom venture beyond the administration of simples, except upon extraordinary occasions, and then in an unscientific manner; in the latter case, I was assured by the officers, that in all their great battles with the Swedes, the greater part of the amputated, from the unskilful manner in which they were performed, or from neglect, died; while slighter wounds, from the same causes, mortified and also terminated fatally. In their army human life was equally disregarded, at least, in those who had unfortunately lost their limbs; for Sir Robert Wilson records, in one of his works, an observation of a Russian general officer, "that the best doctor for a man without his leg was a cannon ball!" Purgatives and blood-letting, which constitute what may be termed the eyes of physic, are disesteemed among them; and thus, a complaint often at first simple and easily manageable, becomes in time, dangerous or incurable. There is not, however, sufficient encouragement in this service for men of real talent. Inexperienced men come here for a time, as probably they could not succeed in other situations; but when more mature in years, and improved in practice, they very naturally seek a more profitable mart for their exertions. There is no surer proof of a body of professional men wanting favour, patronage, and emolument, than being generally deficient in knowledge and skill. In the army, it is remarkable, they take rank according to periods of services; the surgeon of the guards, on board, after twenty-five years service, bore the rank of a full colonel. Most of the hospitals and public establishments are supplied with physicians from Great Britain and Germany: the Emperor's favorite and confidential surgeon, Sir James Wylie, is a native of Scotland.

Masters, though commonly good theoretical navigators, are seldom, as in the English service, expert sailors or tolerable pilots, and therefore, bear little of the responsibility attached to the ship's safety or course when at sea. The captain sustains nearly the whole; he is therefore timid in approaching a coast, or in exploring the gulphs, even near their own shores, and necessarily would be very inefficient in blockading or closely inspecting those of an enemy. The boldness of the English, in this respect, has frequently excited their surprise and admiration; but clever seamen, much experience, and accurate charts, are essential in this arduous species of duty.

There is no officer answering to the name of Purser, the Captain taking charge of the provisions, clothing, and other stores of a similar kind for the use of the crew, which are distributed when

wanted, by a steward under the superintendence of a lieutenant, who takes the name of *Revisor*, does little or no duty besides, and receives a certain sum for his trouble, in addition to his other emoluments.

The warrant officers, as they are termed in the English service, or the *Gunner*, *Boatswain*, and *Carpenter*, are in the Russian upon a different establishment, particularly the former, who is scientifically acquainted with the practice of the artillery, which is never the case with us, the office being commonly conferred on an old deserving seaman, well acquainted, probably, with every department in a ship, but the very one he is called upon to fill. This, therefore, would seem an improvement upon our system, if it was not found that nautical experience and skill counterbalance science in English naval engagements, from the practice of closing directly with the enemy. Where the latter, from calms or other causes cannot be effected, or he is enabled to keep at long-shot distance, it is unquestionable that we are always worsted by superior precision of aim, particularly by the French, who invariably employ artillery officers in their ships. This was one cause why many of our battles with that nation, previous to the last thirty years, were either indecisive or disadvantageous from the distance at which the hostile fleets often engaged, and the superior gunnery of the enemy.

The Ward-room Mess comprises all the principal officers and midshipmen; while in an English ship the latter live by themselves. A tacit agreement seems to exist, to sit in some degree according to rank, though without any formal arrangement on the subject; the mode of helping and the order of the dishes have been already mentioned. During the first ten days of my residence on board, we had two public repasts daily, dinner and supper, the former at twelve o'clock, the latter between four and five in the evening; a cup of coffee taken by each in his private cabin, previous to the one, and after the other, served as breakfast, and as a substitute for that sociable evening refreshment, whether composed of tea or coffee, which commonly passes by the former name. After the guards joined, there was only dinner, but served up an hour later. In an English ship, on the contrary, all the repasts are taken by the officers together, with the regularity of a family.

None of their messes drink wine when by themselves; weak spirits and water, or *quass*, a weak and somewhat sour liquor, made of plain malt and water well shook together, form their only beverage. Along with a large stock of other things laid in to do honour to the "Guards," was a plentiful supply of claret, which, though no person sat at table according to the French custom, after the cloth was removed, failed ere we reached

Cronstadt. The evening was commonly devoted to cards, in which betting went high. The crew likewise have two public meals daily at the hours of twelve and four; English seamen, in addition to these, have breakfast at eight; the rations were of course the same as those supplied to the latter, from being procured in England, but their own, I understand, are much inferior in quality, though not in quantity. A most execrable dish often given them, and sometimes brought to the officers' table, is salt beef soup. They all seem to relish it, though nauseating to my palate in a high degree; but a more serious objection is its powerful tendency to produce scurvy, containing, as it does, the very essence of that disease in its composition; for I have no doubt that this preparation will produce it in one half the time required by the use of the meat itself, and perhaps the occasional use of this article may account for what seemed otherwise inexplicable, the presence of so much scurvy among the crews, though lying for months together in the Medway, and of course constantly supplied with fresh meat, vegetables, and all the usual anti-scorbutics.

Their opinions of England, as already hinted, were of a mixed character; but so difficult is it for a foreigner to judge even tolerably of our manners, character, or institutions, that I had reason to believe the unfavourable side prevailed. Nor is this surprising. Strangers, even of acknowledged talents, assiduity and impartiality, after residing for years in England, cannot, with the exertion of all their industry, understand us. We do not, perhaps, fully know ourselves. Our constitution, an admirable and complicated machine in itself, re-acting on our national feelings and independence, gives a tinge of singularity to many of our habits, and almost all our opinions are unintelligible to others. We are unquestionably a great, but perhaps not a pleasing people. We are too proud to stoop to conciliate, because we think our merits entitled to command admiration; and conscious of superior freedom and intelligence, treat with undisguised contempt the want of them in others. We are, to other nations, subjects more of wonder than of love.

The endless variety of our character seemed to amuse and surprise my new companions. Some, in the course of their stay in England, had met with great civility, and others with occasional rudeness from people in the same condition of life, without their giving any particular cause for either. No two of us they said were alike; while, on the contrary, in other countries, a sample or two from one class of society formed a pretty good criterion of the whole. The higher ranks, they observed, were powerful in their influence in the country, and distant in their manners: the middling class commonly rich, independent and

spirited; the shop-keepers either very supercilious, or on the contrary obsequious; the inn-keepers insolent and exorbitant in their charges; but more especially the lower orders insufferably rude and insulting to their superiors, whether natives or foreigners. This spirit, they could not reconcile with the existence of good government or of public tranquility; and could not be persuaded but that in time it would destroy both. Pride, in all classes, it was observed, formed one of the chief characteristics of our nation. It might be a right feeling, it was by no means impolitic to promote it; but to foreigners it was often offensive and repulsive, depriving even our good qualities of half their due value.

Conversing with some officers one evening, at the usual ward-room lounging place, the rudder-head, I experienced a sudden and most unexpected attack on the merits or rather demerits of my country, from Captain R—, who managed the business so adroitly, that I had not an opportunity of uttering three words in reply. The purport is, perhaps, scarcely worth repeating, except as being a summary of the opinions, or prejudices, of a man really of considerable reading and information; but whose ideas were squared solely by the practices of a despotic government, and that jealousy which individually and collectively the continental nations are so prone to feel of England.

Rushing out of his cabin, with symptoms of impatience, as if primed and loaded with arguments from the perusal of a French philippic against us, he began without preface or delay, by observing that it was extraordinary that England should claim so much merit from recent events, when so little was really due to her. She was a small state, and in herself unimportant; but raised to eminence by fortuitous circumstances. The jealousies of the powers of the continent had given her a footing there some centuries ago, and their quarrels and losses since had been the source of her gain. By their own folly she had become, from being their inferior, their equal; and not contented with this, even aimed, with airs of arrogant superiority, at taking the lead as their master. It was, however, the pride of a dwarf straining to reach the magnitude of a giant. This must soon cease; she had overstrained herself by attempting too much, and would soon discover her weakness, and sink back into that insignificance from which she had only emerged by some skill in commerce and a powerful navy raised upon the wreck of that of the other maritime powers. But ships could not last for ever. Commerce would in time change its seat as it had always done since the world began, and then what would become of her? Could she exist afterwards as an independent state? Probably not.—At all events only a second-rate power, who must receive the law from her stronger neigh-

hours. Her resources, even now, were exhausted. For some years past they had in fact been more fictitious than real. Credit, not capital, had been her support; and like all desperate spend-thrifts, who anticipate their revenues, she had gone on continually borrowing, till the mortgage exceeded the value of the estate. Her public debt was a burthen which must drag her to the earth. It could not be paid honestly; and if otherwise got rid of, would not only ruin her subjects, but blast her credit and consequence irretrievably in the eyes of all foreigners.

The selfishness of England was disgusting;—it was more—it was both galling and insulting. Money seemed to be the god of the country. Individuals, indeed, were both liberal and honourable in their transactions; but the nation was at all times ready to sacrifice either friend or foe for some paltry extension of commerce. She had excluded from her shores half the produce of Europe, and taxed the other half by exorbitant duties. Foreign enterprise seemed to her a crime, and foreign colonies, standing eye-sores. Sooner than see a foot of ground subject to another flag, she would gladly garrison, at an enormous expence, and with no possible profit, all the barren rocks of Europe, and of both Indies. Even her assistance was not disinterested. Her money had been scattered throughout Europe, solely to annoy France; and in fighting the battles of Spain and Portugal, she merely defended herself. For Russia she had done nothing.

As to English liberty it was but a name, which, without inspiring the government, served merely to amuse the people. The Ministers could carry any question they pleased. Parliament was notoriously bought and sold, or, at least, half the seats in it had a fixed price. All the liberty he had seen in England, more than in other countries, was that of a lawless mob parading the streets of Portsmouth, breaking the windows, and otherwise destroying the property of the more respectable inhabitants—a species of liberty which he was thankful Russia did not possess; for there a party of soldiers would have been ordered out to protect the well-disposed. Scenes of this description, though disgraceful to a savage, much more a civilized country, were common in England, and often caused not merely terror and anxiety, but absolute ruin to many peaceable individuals. Instances of this were numerous in London in the riots of 1780, and in Birmingham in 1794, besides many occasional occurrences of a similar kind. Laws, indeed, might exist to punish these excesses—and our punishments were certainly numerous and severe—but there were seldom any precautions taken to prevent them.

Our police was so miserable as to afford little or no protection, even in the most public places, from thieves; for a friend of his

had been robbed by violence at noon-day in the streets of London; and such instances he was wellinformed were not uncommon. In no other streets of Europe were respectable persons so liable to be aggrieved and insulted by the most despicable portion of the population. And this too without redress. Was this system wise, or likely to promote order in society, or general obedience to the laws? Was liberty inconsistent with adequate protection to person and property? If so, he for one gladly preferred what was called slavery in Russia, to the licentious liberty of England. Our laws, he understood, prevented oppression from the powerful or the rich; but left all classes at the mercy of the mob—the worst, the basest, the most ignorant, and the most violent of mankind. Of such vicious and ferocious characters there were more in London than in any other capital of Europe. In Petersburg, at least, the worst part of the population was civil; but in London a fellow detected in robbing, would, probably, add to his insolence by also beating you.

In fine, England, though no doubt a rich country, possessed so little liberality of spirit, as to aim at making the rest of Europe subservient to her plans of draining the whole of its wealth into her own coffers. Her system was selfish, her views contracted—her principles of trade, those of a mere shopkeeper. Though calling herself the benefactor of the continent, all the powers of it disliked her;—some were influenced by fear, some by interest, but none by love.—Blessed as we were with an acknowledged fine country, no foreigner, unconnected with business, would live in it. Our habits were unlike those of any other people; and our society, though unquestionably not deficient in talent, cold, formal and repulsive. Every thing, even the common necessities of life, were at an enormous price. And notwithstanding the boasted equality of the laws, the avenues to public justice were so impeded by heavy charges, as to be rarely accessible to a poor man, when opposed to the rich.—The nation, however, might eventually be good, and happy, and respectable, did it possess a wise or effective system of government; but he was convinced—and he had heard many persons of rank and fortune in the country say the same—that while the monarchy continued limited, and an opposition existed in parliament to thwart all the measures of the ministers, good or bad, it never could attain permanent power or prosperity.

The earnestness and fluency, added to the rhetorical gestures, with which the captain discharged his blunderbuss of censure against poor England, had already drawn all the officers around us, anxious to hear the discussion. Dreading a subject, however, which I had always carefully avoided, because it was unlikely I could convince, and yet impossible to remain silent

if attacked, I tried in vain to get away. The zealous orator had jammed me in a corner, whence, without rudeness, I could not escape. Disappointed in this, I endeavoured, by interruption, more than once to break the thread of this red-hot philippic; but the captain only elevated his voice and gave still more animation to his gestures; replies of every kind, apology, justification, or attack in return, were overpowered by his breathless volubility. The peroration at length arriving, my time seemed at hand. But the slippery orator again foiled me; for the last enlightened dictum was no sooner uttered, than turning quickly round, he fled from the scene of debate, running out of the ward-room with still more precipitation than he entered it, though not without receiving from me a volley of expostulation in his rear, which had something of the effect, at least, if not the reality of victory. For the officers, who enjoyed the scene not a little—as indeed all the argument was carried on in good humour—admitted that this *ruse* seemed as if the speaker were in doubt whether his objections might not be satisfactorily answered.

This tirade, a sprinkling of truth amid a mass of contradictions, which, however, contained several straggling compliments that I have not repeated, forms a pretty good abstract of the general opinions of foreigners respecting England, the peculiarities of which, because they cannot understand, they commonly take care to misrepresent; and it is astonishing with what avidity these misrepresentations are received. All the eyes and ears of the continent are open to any thing defamatory of us; because the people cannot possibly conceive by what fair and honest means so small a country should have become so rich and so formidable. England is to them literally a *Terra Incognita*. Few comparatively visit it; and these cannot look below the surface of public affairs, where the ebullition of a little popular spirit seems to indicate nothing but confusion and insubordination. They know nothing of a government of public opinion; physical force is their only substitute, ignorant, as it seems, of the ten-fold powers of the former great moral machinery of a free nation, for putting its resources and rulers into action.

The captain, therefore, who had resided two years in England, besides several occasional visits, with the advantage of speaking the language nearly as fluently as myself, could not trace our peculiarities to their proper origin, no more than others whose pursuits and studies have been exclusively directed to the subject. But in censuring our commercial views, and depreciating our manufactures, he forgot the preference shewn to the latter by the officers of the fleet around us, many of whom, I was informed, carried large assortments of hard-ware, black and

green woollen cloths, refined sugars, and other articles bearing a high price in Russia. Some of these were doubtless to oblige their friends, and others, it was said, intended as commercial adventures. For this I do not vouch. Some, however, *omitted* to settle with the custom-house—which bears the character of being excessively strict—and the ingenuity of one in evading it, excited considerable laughter. His principal valuables were packed together, something in the shape of a man, placed on a small platform used for removing the sick, covered with a flag as is customary, and in this way safely conveyed, on the shoulders of a boats' crew, through the midst of the revenue myrmidons, as an invalid on his way to the hospital!

Before concluding with the Russian officers, another opinion of theirs may be mentioned. This was, that war would probably soon take place between England and their country. The reason I did not learn, but such seemed the general belief. Should this at any future time be unavoidable—and it never can be justifiable, except from the direst necessity—we shall have little to fear. Even the captain admitted this, when on another occasion, in a half-bitter spirit he exclaimed—"England is strong by accident;—she is secure in spite of herself;—her empire is insular.—But placed in the heart of Germany, how long would she have retained her boasted freedom, wealth, or independence?"

Notwithstanding these little ebullitions of envy, I could plainly perceive the speaker admired us much more than he was willing to acknowledge. Strong hints of this kind slipped out continually.—"England was a most extraordinary country—quite unintelligible to a plain understanding. Every thing he saw, taken individually, was highly defective; but conjointly, their effect was wonderful."—We parted good friends. With a hearty shake of the hand, he said, should the chances of service call an English officer on board again, there was none he would meet with so much pleasure as myself.

As we approached the harbour of Cronstadt, it presented a very magnificent and imposing appearance, even to an English nautical eye, accustomed as it is to ships, boats, docks, canals, moles, fortifications, commercial bustle, and all the other usual accompaniments of maritime life. It is, however, where the men of war commonly lie, at least more of a roadstead than harbour, presenting a great and open expanse of water, though sufficiently protected from any extraordinary violence of wind or sea. The general depth of water is not very considerable. Sand-banks exist here and there, rising in some places nearly to the level of the water, in others above it, on two of three of which, denominated islands, are erected some very strong works, sufficient

to prevent the approach of a hostile fleet, their guns seeming not more than two feet above the water-line. These were principally thrown up under the influence of no small terror immediately on hearing of Lord Nelson's attack on Copenhagen, which severed the Northern Confederacy. His approach subsequently to this place, communicated a panic even to St. Petersburg, which even now seems to be remembered by the shyness displayed on trifling nautical points to English naval officers. In coming in, they did not heave the lead in our ship, nor in any others that we observed, in order, as it is supposed, that the soundings should not be known. The channel of approach was represented, I know not how truly, as narrow; the depth of water in no place exceeding six fathoms, and commonly not more than four and a half; this is little more than sufficient to float a first rate.

The town is situated on the eastern extremity of an island of the same name, about five miles long, though very narrow. The distance is between three and four miles from where the men of war, in readiness for sea, commonly anchor. The pull in an open boat is tedious; but the prospect, when you arrive, of the mighty labours of man in shaping enormous masses of granite into facings of basins, canals, and docks, into fortifications and quays without number, amply compensate the trouble. Every thing we see is on the grandest scale, and every thing, be it remembered, is artificial; nature has done almost nothing, but labour and expence every thing; and though many projects are incomplete, or only little more than begun, yet the scale on which they are planned, is at once a proof of the great designs and the mighty means of this nation, though even now almost in its infancy.

A particular description of the various works will not be necessary here, [and indeed without ocular inspection, would be scarcely intelligible. Nothing has been neglected which can facilitate the instruction, equipment, and repairs of the Imperial navy, with which great point nearly every thing we see is more or less immediately connected. What is more surprising, the credit of almost the whole is due to Peter the Great, the idea, the execution, and nearly the completion are his. Born at once an Emperor and an extraordinary genius, every thing seems to have been not only within his reach, but within the scope of his ambition, from the government of a kingdom to the planing of a board or the manufacture of a nail. Not content with a theoretical knowledge of these among a hundred other arts, he would execute them himself, and in general extremely well. He used to say, "he paid many thousands of worse workmen." It was also one of his occasional occupations

to labour among the stone-cutters employed on the works of this place.

The great basin or wet-dock for the reception of merchantmen, is unequalled by any thing of the kind in Europe, except our own docks at Blackwall, which are, however, of recent date compared to that of Cronstadt. It affords infinite facility to commerce, by carrying vessels nearly into the heart of the town, and may contain, perhaps, three or four hundred sail. At this time it was so well filled that I could scarcely discover a vacancy. Never, even in the Thames, did I observe a more extensive or denser forest of masts. It was gratifying to find that they were nearly all belonging to our country, and of course so many practical testimonies to our wealth, reputation and enterprise. Besides the crews of these vessels, every second person we saw was English; the beach, quays, streets, and taverns (their keepers and servants also of the same nation) were crowded with them, bustling to and fro with the characteristic hurry of commercial business, and occasionally, it must be confessed, dealing out to each other, or to strangers unluckily in their way, some of the choicest flowers of nautical eloquence. This is not an occasional, but on the contrary, a constant scene all the months in which, from the absence of the ice, the Gulph of Finland is open to traders; so that the place might be taken for an English colony. For so exclusively is the trade of this port in our hands, that of a thousand foreign vessels which enter, it is calculated 930 are British. What a pity that two nations so useful, and almost necessary, to each other, and whose real interests in all ordinary conditions of the world, present so little chance of interfering, should ever have been inconsiderate enough to go to war!

The Public buildings are not very numerous, with the exception of the government and mercantile storehouses, hospital for the reception of seamen of the Imperial navy, the barracks, custom-house, and a few others of minor consequence, some in good order, and others, it must be confessed, bearing evident testimony that the attention of the people in power has been of late directed more to other objects. The arsenal is in tolerably fine condition, its interior regulations good, and as far as the finances of the country have lately permitted, pretty well supplied with stores and workmen. It is remarkable, however, how many ships there are here, old, in want of repair, or from some other cause totally unserviceable; even two or three new ones have had their backs broke, as the builders say, in launching, and are therefore, though still perfect to the eye, unfit for service. Altogether, counted upon paper, as sovereigns and statesmen most frequently reckon their forces, the navy is strong, but the effective force is not considera-

ble. Even the majority of those in service are old and much in want of repairs.

The town occupies a considerable extent of ground; the streets irregular and often dirty, and the houses straggling. Many of the latter seem much neglected and going to decay, the access to some being quite ruinous or filthy; others again are not merely of an opposite description, but really elegant, among which may be ranked all those owned or occupied by our countrymen, who carry their characteristic comforts and neatness every where with them, though they seldom make proselytes to their practice. Besides two or three Russian Churches, is an English one with a resident Clergyman, supported by contributions from the merchants. There is another officiating minister also at St. Petersburg; a situation which has been almost always filled by able and pious men, from whom we have at different times derived no little information respecting this extraordinary empire.

Two very tolerable inns, kept by Englishmen, afford pretty good entertainment, when not crowded so much as they were at this moment. Scarcely a vacant corner—nay not even, as they say at the London theatres, “standing room,” could be procured without some difficulty during the day, from the influx of masters of merchantmen, full of bustle and business, cargoes, freights, and insurances, profits and losses from their private adventures, quarrels with their seamen, and appointments to dinner with the merchants, interlarded with jokes and bantering anecdotes, arguments and scolding, loud laughter and occasional swearing, the whole washed down by copious libations of bottled *swipes* (porter) and grog. Such a Babel I never saw before. When the evening called these hardy sons of Neptune on board their vessels, we found both room to breathe as well as very good beds, and when not chusing to dine alone, a very tolerable dinner at the *table d’hôte*, for the moderate sum of two and a half rubles, which at the then rate of exchange was about half a crown.

Groups of unfortunate convicts are to be seen labouring on the public works, and traversing the streets on various duties, heavily ironed; yet probably from the desperation characteristic of such a condition, rather than indifference, singing their national airs, and clanking their chains in “rude harmony.” Their allowance is little more than bread and water, with a very small sum of money daily. Russia is very sparing, and rightly so, of human life. She does not write her criminal laws in the blood of the victims, as we do in humane and enlightened England. No crimes, I believe, but murder and treason, and very frequently not even these, are punished with death. The people, besides a superstitious feeling on the subject, dislike such exhibitions;

and succeeding sovereigns find their account in substituting in their place the knout and exile to Siberia. The barbarities formerly practised in cutting off hands, arms, and ears, and slitting the nostrils, are now seldom executed except for atrocious offences. Branding in the forehead is sometimes the substitute for these.

The resident natives and population are commonly calculated at 40,000, a number, I have some reason to think, exaggerated. In summer the influx of strangers is reckoned at 10,000; but migrations between this and Petersburg are frequent with all classes, particularly servants, tradesmen, clerks, labourers and others. The English form a numerous and important body, highly respected by the natives and visitors of all nations, for their attention and hospitality. Nearly the whole, are of course, mercantile men, and several are reputed very rich.

But the most singular looking objects are the natives, distinguished by sallow, sun-burnt faces, long beards like Jews in mourning, a loose outside garment something like a wide great coat without cape or collar, large trowsers, each leg of which may contain a man's body, and stuffed into boots which seem to have been formed in the infancy of cordwaining. The face, were it not for a certain expression of low cunning, sedate, and plodding, not arch or vivacious, is not displeasing. The hair hangs down to the shoulders, as straight as a pound of candles, and is there cut off all round with great regularity, leaving little more than the mere front of the face uncovered by greasy uncombed locks, commonly tenanted by a numerous brood. When combed and clean, this fashion, though rude, is not altogether displeasing. It gives the wearer an air of vulgar simplicity, strongly reminding us of one of our country bumpkins whose hair has been cut, as the phrase is, round the rim of a trencher.

In the summer time amusements are few; winter is the season for shewing off, when each tries to excel his neighbour in the elegance and richness of his sledge and the spirit and beauty of his horses. The walks near the town are few, walking not being in fashion in Russia. We strolled out about a mile to a kind of tea and coffee house, surrounded by gardens poorly laid out. The house was filled by some scores of the officers of the fleet, presenting a scene of confusion worse, if possible, than the inn in town, and therefore did not detain us long. The English are pretty sociable among themselves. Hospitality is a leading virtue with the Russians, and he who is respectably introduced has a general invitation on the days on which they see company; this he is expected to accept without the formality of further pressing.

Of all the national recreations of a people, that of the bath, as used here, is the most singular. Men and women, totally, or

almost totally, denuded of clothing, mingle together without improper motives or feelings of violated decency, and pass through the ordeal of cleanliness, as if mankind were still in the state of innocence of our first parents in the garden of Eden. Europe has no similar exhibition; and it is difficult to conceive how it originated or was tolerated here. What seems no less extraordinary is the mode in which this purgation of the person is effected; for the bather rushes from the hot or vapour bath streaming with perspiration into a tank of cold water, or into the river, if at hand, or in the winter rolls in the snow, by way of bracing up after the previous relaxation. Some of our party strolling through the town, intruded accidentally on this extraordinary scene. Struck with astonishment they merely looked round and hastily retreated; but the impression of wonder and disgust was not soon eradicated. People here consider it as nothing out of the way; and the fact is a singular instance of the force of custom.

It should be remarked, however, that it is confined to the second, or lower class of people, as in this country there are only masters and slaves, no middle class being yet formed, except a few merchants in the large towns. Saturday is the principal day for this recreation; the admission is but three or four copecs, about two-pence English; and almost every village in the empire possesses its bath. The inner, or vapour room, is prepared by water being thrown on stones heated red-hot; and perspiration is promoted by washing and switching each other with birch rods. When satisfied with this, they proceed to the cold bath, or have pails of cold water poured over their heads.

Cronstadt, or Crown town, offering nothing more worthy of notice, we prepared to set off for the Capital by water; but, English like, had nearly forgotten that passports are necessary credentials for travelling all over the Continent. These were procured without much trouble. A few questions of name and profession served to fill up the blanks in a sheet of substantial paper, and shew that we were, "good men and true." A pretty large, and not unhandsome boat, received our party; and the master calling on board a guard ship, stationed at a little distance from the shore, in order to shew that the passports were "all right," no further interruption occurred.

The passage, which commonly occupies four hours or more, is by no means unpleasant. The boat has usually an awning, as a defence from the sun, and the crew are clean, if not well dressed. The Neva here is of considerable breadth, expanding as it approaches the gulph of Finland over a low tract of ground, which, on the ebb-tide, becomes visible, shewing that the navigable line of the river is far from considerable. At a distance its banks do

not shew to much advantage; but when nearer, several of the merchants' country houses are seen to great advantage.

If the mind finds, at the first approach to St. Petersburg, but little to admire, this feeling gradually gives way as we approach the city. Buildings of solid granite, as extensive as they are elegant, bridges, palaces, quays, churches with gilt domes, and turrets glittering in the sun, the banks of the river faced with the solid rock, and a succession, for a mile or two, of splendid and costly mansions, which it requires some persuasion to believe are the residences of private individuals, all strike upon the eye with irresistible grandeur and a decided feeling in the mind that there is nothing equal to it in Europe. Every thing we see has an air of magnificence; perhaps the size of some, the materials of which they are constructed, and the idea of the labour necessary to give them their present form, may almost impart sensations of the sublime. The Imperial Academy of Arts, the Marine Cadet Institution, and other noble edifices on the left, with the long line of the Great and English Quays, on the right, added to the gigantic facings of the Neva on both sides, are alone sufficient to confer celebrity on any city. But when we disembark near the bridge, rush into Isaac's Place, contemplate the admirable statue of Peter the Great, run our eyes over the Admiralty, up the grand Perspective street, along the Hermitage, Winter, and Marble Palaces, examine the hundreds of other mansions equal to palaces rising on every side, and enter the new Metropolitan Church, dedicated to the mother of the God of Kazan, all other faculties are absorbed in those of unfeigned admiration and astonishment. Other capitals may be larger or richer, but in beauty none for a moment can come in competition with this Queen of the North. Hers is the triumph of Architecture.* In this respect she not only is, but ever must be the first in Europe, or indeed in the world, because the plan and much of the execution were the work of one extraordinary man, whom no future sovereign, however superior in ability, can equal in the means of accomplishing his designs. Regularity pervades the whole; the parts are so well fitted and adapted to each other that we can scarcely find any thing to condemn. It is a city of palaces rising in the midst of marshes.

The site of the city lies in the Province of Ingria, on the banks of the Neva, a rapid river issuing from the Lake of Ladoga, sixty miles distant. Expanding here in its way to the gulph of Finland several islands are formed, on some of which portions of the town

* The style of building in the Russian Capital resembles that of Waterloo Place; and throughout that city, very little inferior to it—in all the public works much superior.

are situated. One of these, named Vassili Ostrof, is the most remarkable; united to the south or Admiralty quarter of the city by a long and ingenious bridge of boats or barges, on which is raised a broad and convenient thoroughfare for every description of vehicle. Peter began his new city in 1703, and it is said to have cost the lives of 100,000 men in building. It ought therefore to be a magnificent place, considering the magnitude of the sacrifice made to found it. Formerly it was exposed to inundations from the rising of the river during strong south-west winds, occasioning much distress and many losses; and though less frequent now, are always dreaded. When it blows from this quarter the inhabitants are put on their guard by guns from the Fortress, and at night by lights; autumn is the season of danger; the highest flood which is remembered rose to ten feet six inches above the usual level of the stream. The great height of the surrounding ground, caused by continual building, is one reason of their present security; but the bridges over the smaller arms of the river are sometimes destroyed by the accumulation of water. Those formed of pontoons, being much elevated in the centre by the rising flood, offer a considerable acclivity to horses and carriages. These approach nearly at a gallop; and by the impetus, aided by the police stationed there to prevent accidents, commonly succeed in gaining the summit. The surrounding country is low and damp; formerly it was uninhabitable, but the presence of man, united to his wants, have now rendered it pretty healthy.

Disembarking near the principal bridge, the first consideration after the gaze of wonder and delight had subsided, was the choice of a house of entertainment. One, whose name I do not recollect, could not accommodate our party. The hotel de L'Europe, as some of them had a week before experienced, possessed very poor accommodations, though with charges as extravagant as any house upon the continent from which its name is taken. In this emergency a kind of boarding house, kept by one of our countrymen, who however had at this time no other inmates, was recommended, and we had no reason to regret the choice. The table was daily well covered, and the beds clean, at a moderate charge. Besides, the house formed a kind of human menagerie, fit for a philosopher to study national character. Our host was an officious, good natured Hibernian, who knew every thing and every body, and moreover somewhat partial to strong waters; his wife a German, his waiter a Frenchman, his maid-servants Russ; varied occasionally by the presence of some of his friends: viz. Danes, Swedes, Dutch, Italians, Americans, and two or three straggling Spaniards. Forty years ago there was no such thing as an inn in this city.

The equestrian statue of Peter I. as being one of the greatest and most conspicuous ornaments of the city, usually claims the first

attention of travellers. It is indeed a magnificent object, vast in its proportions, admirable in its execution, honorable to the extraordinary personage represented, to the extraordinary woman who ordered, and to the eminent artist who designed it, and not less happy as a rare occurrence in works of art—in its situation, standing in St. Isaac's Place, one of the finest squares or open areas in Europe.

It was opened to the public in its present situation the 27th August, 1782, by almost as solemn a ceremony as the proclamation of a real Emperor. Catharine and all her court viewed the ceremony from a platform; a cordon of troops surrounded the scaffolding; without were all the population of the city, who rent the air with acclamations, when, on a signal being given, the inclosure, which had hitherto concealed it, disappeared. On this occasion all criminals, condemned to death, were pardoned, all deserters forgiven, and all convicts sentenced to hard labour, except those guilty of murder, released.

Walking, I have remarked, is an exercise not in fashion in this country. The English have tried to introduce it in vain. Few genteel people are seen on their feet in the streets; and some years ago it would have been reckoned the height of vulgarity. Every body, even the barber who comes to shave you, rides, or is expected to ride, however short the distance or unfurnished the pocket, though the charge it is true is not considerable. The common medium of conveyance is a Drojeka, or, as it is pronounced, Drosky; a machine which, as well as many other things here, is unlike any thing else of the kind I have seen in the world, though it has been my fortune to have visited almost all parts of it.

The plainest of those in the streets for hire may in a few words be described, as a short, oblong, uncovered bench, variously ornamented, hung on springs, and running on four low wheels behind one horse, who goes at a pace something between a hard trot and a gallop. Close to his tail sits the driver, or Ivatschic, bearing his number on his back. On each side, with their backs to each other, and riding side-ways, may sit a passenger; the seats cushioned, and the feet on a rest elevated only twelve or fourteen inches from the ground. No covering defends the traveller from the rain above, or mud beneath, sun and dust out of the question. What purpose in nature, except swift locomotion, the Drosky is intended to answer, I cannot conjecture. Comfort and cleanliness, should the weather be the least unfavourable, are impossible; and as to convenience, it is, as an honest countryman of ours remarked, just no convenience at all. Yet, these are the only substitutes for our hackney coaches. In winter they give place to the sledge.

The sledge is a machine equally as singular as the drosky, by

means of which the communication is kept up in winter between all parts of this vast empire, carrying commodities and persons from Kamtschatka to Petersburg when no other mode of conveyance would be practicable. It is formed of two longitudinal pieces of timber about five feet long, shod with iron, and united by cross pieces, upon which is erected accommodation according to the pocket or condition of the owner, and yoked to the horse by a pair of shafts. This is the general form, though in some portions of the Empire slight variations are seen, adapted to local circumstances. Those of the peasants are often merely logs of wood joined together, to a sailor's eye simply forming what he would call a land-raft. When owned by the nobility they are, on the contrary, very elegant vehicles, highly and expensively decorated. Great pride in their horses is a distinguishing feature among the young men of fortune. Those kept for the sledge are peculiarly beautiful, high spirited, and of the Arabian breed. One goes in the shafts; the other prances, curvets, and displays all his *points* of figure and action by the side of his companion. Their manes and tails are never cut, and some attain an enormous length. So essential is this beauty to a Russian horse, that those who are deficient in either, from accident or the poverty of nature, are supplied by their owners with false appendages of this kind cut off from the dead. The harness is likewise gaudy; ornaments of brass and silver, party-coloured tassels and embossed leather, are thickly spread over it, not always with taste or regard to effect.

Numbers of coaches in the English fashion are frequently seen in the streets with four horses, driving nearly at a gallop; this in fact is the pace of every vehicle in the place; pedestrians, however, are seldom endangered, because the streets are wide, and the population, compared with the extent of the place, thin. In addition, the postillion, always a lad riding on the off horse, and habited in a long brown coat tied round his middle by a red-sash, is often bawling out to those in the way to take care. His skill and care are remarkable; and the leaders being widely traced from the shaft horse, he must often in turning a corner exert both. The coachman has the addition of a venerable beard to his countenance; the footman military boots, spurs, and sometimes shewy liveries.

A coach or chariot is an absolutely necessary appendage to every stranger who would visit or be visited, or otherwise be considered a person of respectability. Without this he is nothing. A walking Englishman, indeed, straying to the shores of the Neva to dissipate his constitutional spleen, or indulge his curiosity, is occasionally tolerated; but any other foreigner so situated would soon find himself in *Coventry*. The hire of one of these vehicles for a month, at the present rate of exchange, would amount to about £15 sterling; they remain in attendance the whole of the

day, the men seeming to eat, drink and sleep, pertinaciously on their respective posts.

The expences of living certainly are considerable, more so by a great deal than in Stockholm, though perhaps not much more than in Copenhagen. Yet the necessaries of life are cheap, though the aggregate of expence is otherwise; I mean comparatively, for out of England no man would square his ideas of living by the heavy claims upon his purse incident to London. The hotels certainly are as dear; but a single man can always manage at much less comparative charges than a family. To the latter, house rent is dear, education is dear, dress is dear, wine is dear, all other luxuries are dear, while the equipage is not cheap. Men servants, finding themselves with food, may be hired for £30 a year. Exclusive of the Opera and other amusements, a small family, I was told, with economy, may live pretty well on £900 per annum. This, though comparatively little in England, is high for the Continent.

The streets are wide, straight, and some of great length; particularly the Grand Perspective, which extends nearly to four miles. They are all, with perhaps some exceptions, paved; but few have foot-paths for pedestrians. The Perspective, indeed, originally possessed this distinction, till the unfortunate Paul substituted for them a broad walk in the centre, planted with linden trees, which has by no means an unpleasant effect. The English Quay, with its splendid mansions and bank, and facings of hewn granite, nearly two miles long, is a magnificent place. And it is almost a source of pride to a true-born Briton, to know that, even in a foreign land, his countrymen are sufficiently wealthy and important to retain, in a great degree, this noble pile of buildings for their residence. Except upon this, and one or two other streets, walking is certainly more unpleasant and fatiguing than any other place I have been in. These, being flagged or gravelled, present a flat surface to the feet; but in the others, the prominent points of the pavement become so uneasy after an hour or two's walk, as to remind me frequently of the facetious Peter Pindar's story of the "Pilgrims and the Peas." Drosky-riding is therefore, perhaps, more necessary to the ease of the inhabitants than at first sight may appear.

The style of building houses is light, shewy, and agreeable; something between the Grecian and Italian. The houses are commonly large, three and four stories high, with frequently a gate-way in the centre, leading sometimes to an inner open area, not always very clean and characteristic of what we expect in the entrance to a rich and powerful nobleman's palace. Amid many edifices of marble and other stone, the general materials for building are brick, stuccoed, or stained, to imitate the former. The resemblance is sometimes perfect, for the Russian workmen are, pro-

hably, the most skilful in Europe; and every house, when completed, is subject to the revision of persons in power. The shops make but little external show; but within are both elegant and spacious. Many of these are kept by natives of France. The number of *Marchandes des modes* particularly attract the notice of a stranger.

Within these few years, the great majority of houses in the outskirts of the city, and in the more private streets, were built of wood. These, as they fall to pieces, or require considerable repairs, must be replaced by the more substantial fabrics now in use, pursuant to standing orders of the police, which, by order of the Emperor, is furnished with plans for that purpose. Every thing indeed is done which can contribute to the embellishment or convenience of this City of Palaces. And if the means be sometimes arbitrary, which an Englishman can scarcely forgive, they may, in this instance be excused, on account of the superior claims which the capital of a great nation always possesses, to the improving hand, the taste, designs, liberality, and revision of her sovereigns. London is miserably deficient in all the more noble and striking features of architecture.

The fine river Neva, during the summer months, presents a noble appearance; the stream broad, deep, and rapid, being covered with boats bearing gay pendants, and streamers floating in the breeze. It is well known, that Peter, among other extraordinary projects to bend the minds of his people to his own mode of thinking, interdicted the passage by bridges for some time, in order to promote that by boats. The nautical mania, however, never raged very strongly among the Russians. To a people so generally continental, as scarcely ever to see the ocean, it is, in fact, unnatural. And in any country, where a large standing army admits of choice in the military profession, it is unquestionable, that the land-service will always be chosen, both by officers and privates, in preference to that of the sea. This is the general feeling of the Russian nobility.

During the winter the surface of this river offers a singular spectacle in the number of sledges and skaters flying to-and-fro with incredible swiftness. Towards the end of September the frost commonly sets in, and breaks up in April or May. The bridges, formed upon pontoons, and of course moveable, are opened to admit the passage of large masses of floating ice, which would otherwise destroy them. Bridges, such as ours, would not stand here, from the pressure of the ice against the piers of the arches; and the width is much too considerable for the span of one arch. Plans of this kind have frequently been proposed, and models submitted for approval; but the present structures are, perhaps, the best suited to local circumstances.

Canals are another noble feature of this seat of the Czars ; faced like the river with the solid rock. The principal are those of Moika, Fontanka, Katarina, and Nikolai, which variously intersect it, crowned by various small bridges, and presenting a resemblance to some of the cities of Holland. It cannot but be a matter of surprise that London has nothing of this kind, so well supplied as it is with the means. On the Surry side of the river it would be easily practicable, and form a new, useful, and beautiful addition to our own metropolis.

One of the first things which meets the eye of the stranger in approaching this city is the gilded cupolas and spires of the churches. This is done, it is said, with ducat gold. The effect under a fervid sun is singular ; and were there not abundant other uses for gold in Russia, though the expence was not, perhaps, vast, it would be a proof of magnificence. Numbers of these edifices rise in every quarter, monuments of the religious devotion of the people, and not unworthy of the sacred cause to which they are appropriated ; whose sublime truths, though they cannot be improved by the pomp of the place in which they are uttered, deserve, at least, as suitable a receptacle as things of little or no moment.

Kazan Church, or the great metropolitan temple, situated on the right hand in proceeding up the Grand Perspective, is the most magnificent edifice of the kind in Europe, after St. Peter's at Rome, and St. Paul's in London. It is on the site of an old church of the same name, and held in high veneration, on account of containing a sacred figure of the Virgin. Here the Emperor and Imperial Family frequently bowed the knee, in humble submission to divine power. Here also, each passing native paid his obeisance to the patron Saint within, by taking off his hat, bowing, and crossing the hand on the breast. It was begun in 1802. At present, it may be called all but finished ; after the expenditure of an immense sum, though in some parts, I understand, contracted from the original design, which was grounded upon that of St. Peter's.

Within, the extent is amazing, presenting at least one source of the sublime,—space. The decorations, it is almost needless to say, are neat, handsome, and highly finished ; but what struck me with considerable surprise and pleasure, they were also plain. This I did not calculate upon ; for the Roman churches offend so much in the contrary excess, that in the Greek, which in other respects so much resemble them, no material difference could be expected.

In the exclusion of frippery to the superior claims of chaste and unassuming simplicity, there is, however, one object so truly beautiful, and yet so splendidly grand, that neither St. Peter's

nor St. Paul's, nor any other building in the world, can produce any thing similar. This is a wood of pillars of Finland granite, each formed of only one solid, unbroken piece, about (perhaps) forty feet high, and polished by extraordinary care and labour to the smoothness of glass! Compared with this, some of the wonders of the fairy palaces are nothing. And though quarrying, conveying, erecting, and polishing such mighty masses of matter unbroken, might seem a labour fit only for their genii; yet the whole was performed by simple, uneducated, half-clothed, half-civilized Russian boors, without assistance from foreign talent. The diameter of each pillar may be about forty-eight or fifty-eight inches; and the total number is, or was intended to be, (for I omitted at the moment to count) eighty-four. The effect of the whole is no less handsome than magnificent; the granite is of a greenish colour, and in some, shades of light sparkle brilliantly.

The architect of this imperial structure, which will immortalize him as much as its patron and promoter, (the munificent Alexander) was a slave; or, in other words, born on the estate of a powerful nobleman, Count Strogonoff, to whom his services for life, according to the laws of this country, were thenceforth due. His education was necessarily confined; but displaying, at an early period, strong traits of superior genius, his noble owner had him instructed first, and convinced of his talents, at length gave him liberty.

I had almost forgotten to say that the remains of the celebrated General Suwarroff lie here. The inscription, in Russian, on the tomb is short but pithy, and admirably suited to the character of the man:—

HERE LIES SUWARROFF!

The removal of this warrior to his present abode is but recent, having formerly lain in the church and monastery of St. Alexander Newsky.

These, which are moated round, cover an extensive patch of ground, at the very extremity of the Grand Perspective, and were built by Peter the Great, over the shrine of a former Prince and Saint of this name, who had been successful in defending his country; but like many other patriots, prematurely lost his life by domestic treachery. An order of knighthood, if I mistake not, has been likewise instituted to his memory.

The brethren of the monastery, sixty in number, are of the order of St. Basil, a favorite saint in the Greek Church. Their costume is truly dismal, being black from head to foot; their persons stout, their countenances sallow, disfigured by long beards, which in men of the middle period of life always gives a ferocious appearance.

Within the walls of the establishment is a place of interment, adorned by several monuments, pretty well executed; a kind of vaulted way is used for the same purpose, commonly occupied by persons of consequence. Round the cloisters are double windows to obviate the piercing cold of winter, and during this season stoves in every part disseminate an agreeable warmth, without which the place would be scarcely habitable.

Returning through the Perspective from the monastery, we stopped to examine the mart of industry, Gostinnoi Dvor, situate on the left, not far from the Kazan Church. It is a vast building of two stories, defended from the weather by piazzas, filled with small shops and stores, provided with every native article of use or ornament, for biped or quadruped. The solicitations for our custom were equally incessant and innumerable, resembling the teasing importunities of the Israelites of rag fair, London, whom they resemble in more respects than one.

The Russian tradesmen are perhaps the keenest of their craft in Europe. In skill, perseverance, assiduity, and due obsequiousness, none can exceed them; but strict regard to character must not be reckoned among their merits, for few will cheat with so little ceremony, heedless, as it seems, whether their future interests may not suffer by their unfair dealings. It is remarkable, however, that this characteristic is common to all people unacquainted with the more extended principles of commerce, or imperfectly civilized; they only look to the present, leaving the future to take care of itself. He commonly demands twice the sum he will take for an article, and if he meets with a novice in the art of dealing in his country, may make a good day's work out of a single bargain. Not content with this, he will occasionally take the liberty of substituting an inferior for a better article, smiling all the time most good-naturedly in your face, with the dexterity of a professor of legerdemain.

Several well-dressed women paraded this walk, though not in such numbers as might be expected, or as the place of recreation deserves, were the exercise more in fashion. Nor were they handsome. Female beauty is not a flower of Russian growth, yet exceptions, of course, occur; generally speaking, however, their features are not agreeable, partaking something of the Tartar cast; few have any colour, owing, perhaps, to indolence, to diet, to over-heated rooms in the winter, and to seldom courting the fresh air, at least so much as they ought in summer, and scarcely at all during the reign of the frost. Their dress, is commonly in the French style, almost all the milliners and dress-makers being of that nation.

A very favourite resort of the citizens in summer, is the domains and gardens of the nobility, situate on some of the islands of the Neva. A few of these display much care and

taste in the arrangement, as well as in the works of art, with which they are occasionally ornamented. To these they are permitted to resort, to enjoy the fresh air, and the green and flowery parterres, adding a zest to the rural repast which forms a feature in the excursion. Alexander, as much, perhaps, from good nature as policy, frequently treats the citizens with parties of pleasure; in the summer to fire-works, music, and dancing at Peterhoff; in the winter to a masquerade, in the spacious saloons of the winter palace. The nobility, in degree, imitate the example, by granting every indulgence in their power.

The summer gardens are a work of Catharine's, the walks extensive, the parterres regularly laid out, the company frequently fashionable, and the balustrade lining the banks of the river tasteful and grand.

The fortress, raised by Peter for the defence of his new capital, but for many years used only as a state prison, stands on one of the islands, containing also several good streets, to reach which we had to cross two bridges. The work itself is pretty extensive, and formed or faced with granite. Within it is the church of St. Peter and St. Paul, remarkable for its lofty spire, gilt with ducat gold, and for being the earthly resting place of the sovereigns of Russia, since the days of Peter the Great. They are entombed in stone, covered by richly embroidered velvet palls. I could not look on that of Paul, standing alone, without some feelings of pity, enemy as he was to our country at his death. But midnight assassination is so horrible in itself, so treacherous in principle, so revolting to every feeling of men, and to every institution of society, that perpetrated on whom it may, it is susceptible of only one emotion—unqualified horror and detestation. Even in Turkey, murder does not always accompany deposition from the throne; and for a madman, surely there is some other treatment than strangling.

Within the fortress is likewise the mint. England, I understand, for we were not permitted to enter, supplied the apparatus for coining; but there is little use for it, the precious metals being scarce. Siberia, however, along with her furs, has furnished a little both of gold and silver.

The cells for state prisoners, situated mostly in the bastions, are said to be numerous, but, happily for humanity, have been of late years little tenanted. Few that once entered them ever emerged again to the light of day. Siberia and the Knout were much less terrible than perpetual enthrallment here; and accordingly, they have been, with comparative humanity, substituted during the last twenty-five years, even by the jealous Catharine. It was in one of these cells that the beautiful and accomplished woman, already alluded to, the reputed daughter of the Empress Elizabeth, entrapped by the matchless villainy of Orloff, terminated

her existence; whether by the dagger, poison, strangling, or drowning, is still matter of doubt; though in the eye of the faithful narrator of history, and of a still higher judge, the mode is of little consequence.

From the summit of the church may be obtained the best view, both in its principal parts and as a whole, that can be had of a city, whose outline, if filled up in every part, would embrace a circumference of twenty English miles.

Returning from this temple of durance, which had excited some melancholy thoughts, and which is regarded by the populace with no little awe, our driver, who had fixed his eye with a chuckle of welcome recognition, on a passing female of his acquaintance, to the momentary neglect of his horse's head, ran so close to a Cossack of the guard, as to disturb the economy of his trappings. The latter, turning his horse round with a furious expression of countenance, seemed as if he would strike him to the ground; from my position I was half afraid of coming in for a share of his vengeance; but curbing his passion with what we afterwards understood to be uncommon forbearance, merely uttered a few maledictions, accompanied by very intelligible threats, and permitted the offender to proceed. Had there been any of the police at hand, and few streets are without them, Mr. Jehu would, probably, have received several thwacks from their batons over his shoulders, and perhaps mulcted into the bargain.

It is scarcely necessary to describe these strange-looking troops, the Cossacks, who have already gratified the eyes of the gazing multitudes in London. If not soldiers for show, however, they are at least admirable for service, in the light parts of an army, as videttes, scouts, or foragers, and in a pursuit few can equal them; their natural love of enterprise, and capacity for enduring fatigue, being quickened by the hope of plunder. I was frequently assured by the officers of the guards that, but for this uncouth looking force, the French retreating army would have got off with much more ease, and perhaps a third less loss than it actually experienced. The hardihood of their horses is perhaps of equal value with the spirit of the men. What the latter is able to endure the former seems always willing to second—both in their way are unequalled; the horses require neither groom, stable nor litter and the smallest portions of water and food; the man, in emergencies, is, if possible, still more abstemious.

There are three distinct nations or tribes of these people, which take the names of the Donsky, Uralsky, and Baschkir Cossacks, differing only in minor points, and some, particularly the latter, in variation of dialect, which is a corrupt Russian. Their qualities, arms, equipments, regulations, and services are however nearly the same. A considerable number are always on duty in Petersburg, particularly about the palaces and the grand parade.

Somewhat in doubt respecting the professional skill of our Drosky-driver, we discharged him, and proceeded on foot to view the Academy of Arts, a large pile of building, situated in the Vassili-Ostroff. In one of the principal rooms were a number of casts from the antient statues, including all, I believe, "known to fame," among artists and connoisseurs. The paintings were few, some unexplained cause having occasioned their temporary removal; and native productions of merit are unknown in Russia. Several architectural models are to be seen here, both of home and foreign erections. None of the students were at work during our visit; and on the whole we felt somewhat disappointed.

The ACADEMY OF SCIENCES is a noble erection, situated in the Vassili-Ostroff, but not so far down the bank of the river. It is another testimony to the comprehensive capacity of Peter the Great, who having done for his subjects all that was possible for man to do in the more useful and necessary, but perhaps humbler arts of life, finished his career by opening a door to native talent in the higher departments of science. In fact it was one of the last acts of his life, having himself drawn the plan, and signed it on the 10th of February, 1724. Catharine I. faithfully fulfilled the design of her great predecessor and husband. On the 27th December, 1725, the society, composed of some natives, and many illustrious foreigners, assembled for the first time, and the 1st of August following, to give still greater eclat to the infant seat of learning, she honoured it with her presence, when Bulfinger, Professor of Natural History, delivered a suitable oration on the occasion.

Since the first institution it has experienced some vicissitudes, being neglected by some of the sovereigns, and encouraged by others; its members occasionally of greater or less character, its transactions and publications displaying more or less activity and talent. Among the professors are reckoned the illustrious names of Wolff, Hermand, two Bernoullis, two De Lisses, Bulfinger, Gmelin, Guldenstaedt, Lomonosof, Rumovsky, Pallas, and that extraordinary prodigy of memory and mathematics, the celebrated Euler, to whom the volumes of transactions were so frequently indebted for their ablest and most ingenious articles. The first volume appeared in 1728; for some years they came out pretty regularly, but of late have diminished in frequency. Mathematics constituted the favourite subject at first, as of our own Royal Society; like our own also, this study has been latterly neglected for natural history, under the encouragement and example of the famous Pallas. The total number of volumes published is between seventy and eighty. Nothing can be more modest, or truly characteristic of such a society, in such a country, than the motto, *Paulatim*.

Besides a president and director, fifteen professors fill various chairs, with salaries from £150 to £700, besides a residence and some other advantages. The vacancies, however, I was told were not always regularly filled up. The annual sum set apart for its maintenance by Catharine was nearly £14,000, and I believe this has not been increased, her boundless expenditure in every way, and on every object that gratified the whim of the moment or promised applause from strangers, and from posterity, having caused financial derangements, which the prudential economy of the present amiable monarch has not yet been able to remove.

The Museum forms a principal object of the curiosity of strangers. Here, after two or three hours examination, we were gratified with monsters of all kinds, biped, quadruped, bird, fish, and reptile; wonders, natural, and, I had almost said, supernatural; ingenious mechanical inventions, upon which the inventors spent the best part of their lives, and Catharine some of her money; metals, minerals, and fossils; specimens and varieties in natural history; and not only an abundance of the manual works, models, and amusements in wood, of Peter the Great, but the very hero himself, that is a wax-work figure of him, said to be a great likeness, clothed in a full suit of his identical garments, in pretty good order, with the sword he usually wore. Besides these, there are various other samples of his common working dress, worn thread-bare, for every one knows Peter was nothing of the beau, and a hat, shot through, I think, at the battle of Pultowa.

Several of the more distant parts of the empire contribute to the collection of curiosities in various specimens of their produce, animal and mineral, the dress, implements, and ornaments of the natives; among others are several sledges and the figure of a Kamschatkan Soothsayer from the life. The South Sea Islands and North West coast of America have likewise contributed to the embellishment of the museum, some things being the gift of English circumnavigators, and others of their own, Kruesenstern and Lisiansky, who went out in 1803 and returned in 1806, thus accomplishing, in the first days of Alexander, a feat of science which Catharine during her long reign did not attempt. There are likewise several models of bridges, some by men of science; others by unlettered boors, which display wonderful genius; they are principally meant for the Neva, in lieu of the present structures, and would certainly be more elegant, though perhaps not more useful.

Remounting our droskies, and seizing fast hold of the sash of the driver, which to a novice in this species of riding is almost necessary to prevent measuring his length on the pavement

should a rough stone be in the way, we set off as usual at a half-gallop to examine the exterior of the vast pile of building, called the Winter-Palace. Strangers, at this time, were not admitted to view the apartments; nor is there indeed much to see, except large rooms, galleries, corridors, and stair-cases, presenting nothing remarkable but their numbers and a few fine chandeliers. Occasionally a favoured few find access to the private apartments, which display some handsome and costly furniture, native and foreign.

The architecture of this mighty edifice, which stands on the bank of the Neva, is complained of as heavy, but there is nevertheless an air of grandeur and magnificence about it, arising perhaps partly from its extent, which is not a little imposing. It is built of brick stuccoed, and consists of a basement and two stories, supported by columns, and set off with balustrades. Several statues of merit ornament the exterior in many parts; some however are so elevated, or placed in regard to position, as to be little, if at all, distinguishable from the ground. In this capacious erection of the Empress Elizabeth reside the Imperial family during that frigid season whence its name is derived; and here are given those splendid but suffocating entertainments to the Bourgeois, whom all wise monarchs, restricted or despotic, make it their business occasionally to court. Here, it was told us, two thousand persons have been sometimes stuffed into these apartments on such occasions. The sight of so many happy and gratified faces, bedizened with finery, which we should think adapted only to half-savage characters in theatrical representation, must be no doubt pleasing to every lover of his species; but on account of the heat of the rooms, and the concatenation of unsavory odours from the intermixture of so numerous an assemblage not of the most delicate class, we were told it was much better to be a spectator than partaker of the evening's amusement. The number of stoves constantly in use here in winter is stated to be enormous,—so many, if I mistake not, as eleven or twelve hundred, of all descriptions.

Pretty well satisfied with the exterior of this, we found little difficulty in becoming better acquainted with the inside of the Hermitage, an adjoining palace, as much adapted for show as the other is for use, built by Catharine, and her favourite retreat, when temporarily charmed by a new swain, from the noise and bustle of politics and the court. From this circumstance does this splendid temple of luxury, as little appropriate in extent, simplicity, and innocence to its name-sake, as can well be imagined, take its title. It forms in fact a wing of the winter palace, there being a communication between them over an archway, which separates the bases of the two structures. Into the inmost recesses of this enchanted mansion, few but the personal favourites

of the Empress were permitted to penetrate, during much of her time. It formed a kind of sanctuary to her privacies. All that money could purchase, and ingenuity contrive, to render it not only beautiful in itself, and admirable in the works of art, as well as in some of the riches of nature, but the very first for contrivances, comforts, and conveniences, of every description, were unsparingly procured. Several marvellous stories are told of it in her reign. By stamping on the floors of some apartments, couches of down would arise in a moment; in others bouquets of flowers in all seasons, and the most rare and costly perfumes. Springs touched in certain places would produce the sweetest music; and when the presence of attendants was not agreeable, sumptuous repasts were introduced by invisible means. In all these mechanical contrivances she took particular delight, and paid for them handsomely; national taste had, perhaps, something to do with them, as the inventors were commonly Germans. Here likewise she meditated some of her greatest projects; and with Potemkin arranged the political machinery for carrying them into execution, in which, perhaps, no sovereign was ever more successful, as it is doubtful whether she gained more by her intrigues or by her arms.

Ascending a capacious stair-case a minute carried us into an immense suite of rooms, occupied by paintings of the first masters. Among these are works of Rembrandt, Teniers, Wouwermans, Berghem, Vandyke, Snyders, Rubens, Guido, Salvator Rosa, two Poussins, Murillo, Claude Lorraine, Giordano, and at least fifty others, many being from the Houghton collection, purchased in England. Numbers of the best productions of those eminent men adorn these walls, and also, perhaps, though I do not pretend to be a connoisseur, a few of the worst. Each master has, as far as is practicable, a room to himself; but three or four in the same style and subject may be seen quietly together, where the rival and jealous painters, if alive, would scarcely let them inhabit the same city.

Taken altogether, notwithstanding many undoubted deductions on account of bad taste, the assemblage at the Hermitage is superior in numbers, and, what is more, not inferior in excellence to any other in Europe, not excepting even that which the Louvre boasted, as the spoils of plundered Europe. To an artist the contemplation of so much excellence must be a great source of enjoyment. Admission is not difficult, and those who desire it have permission to copy what they please. The art, however, has not yet taken root in the country, at least the fruits are not evident. Sculpture, architecture, engraving and medaling have had better success, and seem more adapted to the genius of the people. Painting, it may be as-

serted, is the last of the fine arts which attains perfection in all countries. Two copiers, an elderly man and a youth, were busily occupied during our visit upon a head—not of Guido or Rembrandt—but an indifferent one of the Emperor; one of which, we understood, was by his own orders, and intended for a present.

The collection of curiosities is not only extensive, but substantially valuable, embracing a variety of precious stones of considerable size and the finest water, large pearls, masses of silver and gold from various countries, numerous specimens of mineral ores, all the coins of the world, cameos, intaglios, a large assortment of medals, of which study, it is said, the Empress Dowager is very fond, moon-stones, as they are called, fine specimens of the verd-antique, rare and valuable gems, rare samples of mechanical ingenuity, a few curious models in wax, some works in ivory of Peter the Great, and a thousand other things, the bare catalogue of which would fill a volume.

The garden, situated upon the same floor, and of course elevated to a considerable height from the ground, probably between thirty and forty feet, is not one of the least curiosities of the Hermitage. Here, suspended as it were in air, the visitor, to his amazement, treads on gravel walks, sees the green turf vivid around him, and finds shrubs, and even trees thicker than his leg, growing in luxuriance, under the shelter of which he may take refuge on a couch, and contemplate the execution and proportions of some favourite statue, several of which are at hand. Within a short distance he may distinguish an orangery covered in; and be treated by the vocal exertions of an aviary, collected from other climates, the little choristers flying to and fro without restraint, and resting upon what are considered their favourite trees, which have been brought and planted in this aerial situation expressly for their enjoyment. The novelty of the whole scene, and the recollection where it was situated, not on the ground, but on (or near) the top of a palace, added to the overpowering influence of the boundless riches of nature and art which we had just examined, produced an effect that for some minutes kept me tongue-tied, and induced an opinion that the wonders of “The Hermitage” alone are almost worth a voyage to St. Petersburg.

The theatre, to which we next proceeded, offers nothing remarkable, and so far disappointed expectation. Magnificence is so obvious in every thing else, that we likewise expected a more than ordinary share here. It is, however, very small, so much so as in my opinion nearly to destroy the illusion of the acting; the seats are semi-circularly arranged before the curtain, rising one above another, covered with crimson cushions

and without backs, as in England. But a private theatre always appears to me a selfish, if not an unsociable place; for half the amusement arises from observing the uncontrolled pleasure and happy faces of those around us, which the decorum necessary to be observed before Imperial Personages has a tendency to restrain.

The scenery, which we did not see, is said to be very fine, being the work of the best artists the country can boast, with the addition of several Frenchmen and Italians. Balls and court-suppers are frequently given here, the pit being then boarded over level with the stage. The display, on these occasions, is represented as gorgeous and magnificent in the extreme, far beyond any thing else of the kind in Europe, representing more the fabled scenes of fairy palaces than the actual abode of mortals, no expence being spared, and all the taste and skill of the empire put in requisition for the occasion. We stopped some time to examine it; while the Catharines and Potemkins, and Orloffs and Panins, and Bestucheffs, all the famous and infamous characters, which at once distinguished and disgraced this court, passed in review before the "mind's eye," and compelled us, in some measure, to acknowledge that, notwithstanding the crimes of some, there was a brilliancy about others admirably adapted to impose on the understandings of the great mob of mankind.

The MARBLE PALACE AND CHURCH are, perhaps, two of the most costly and least elegant edifices in Petersburg, both undertaken by the orders of Catharine. The former stands in the vicinity of the Hermitage, and was raised for her favourite, Gregory Orloff, some short time before she presented him with an immense estate—not of so many thousand acres—but of 6000 peasants. It is of Siberian marble, of grey, brown, and copper colours, but neither within nor without offers any thing remarkable, but splendid furniture and some remarkable fine tapestry. For a short time it became the residence of the weak and unfortunate Stanislaus, the last of the Polish Kings, the favourite, lover, minion, and victim of Catharine, who pulled him down, as she set him up, without sufficient reason; but who, had he possessed the firmness of a patriot, or the independence of a man, would have been popular with his subjects, and thus might have retained the distinguished seat to which he had been exalted. This palace, after having been some years in the occupation of some attendants on the court, has been an occasional residence for the Grand Duke Constantine.

The Church, standing on one side of the area, in which appears the statue of Peter, not being finished at Catharine's death, was completed by Paul, his share of the work being

partly brick, his mother's, marble and porphyry ; but the aversion to her crimes and favourites extended even to her works of art. The interior is extensive, and the dome seemingly immense. Flags of different nations, bearing evident tokens of age or hard service, were suspended from the walls, as from those of all other places of worship we saw. Among others, was an English Union Jack, the only one of our nation, though those of others were abundant, which, from its size and make, had, probably, belonged to some boat of the Baltic fleet, driven on shore, perhaps, by stress of weather ; for nothing larger of ours ever fell into the hands of the Russians. Though a solitary trophy, it excited some national feelings, so that we contemplated the practicability of its removal ; and had the least opportunity offered would certainly have made the attempt. The exterior of the Church has a dull and heavy look, from which the inside is not exempted.

St. Michael's Palace, the last, as well as favourite, residence of the unfortunate Paul, stands near the summer garden. It is a vast quadrangular fabric, built by an Italian architect, of red brick, upon a basement of Finland rock, displaying little taste, but many spacious apartments, and numberless windows. Only two years and a half were occupied in the erection ; by dint of incessant labour, and the almost daily superintendence of the Emperor himself, who looked forward to its completion with an eagerness, now considered by his superstitious subjects, ominous of his own fate ; for here the unhappy monarch was soon after put to death. What induced him to construct a new palace, while so many were unoccupied, is difficult to say, except it were whim, or an aversion to his mother's memory. The latter is commonly believed ; and among his people, at least his nobility, it constituted one of his deadly sins. She had practised that system of favouritism, of loose principles, and of ostentatious profusion, so congenial to minds only half enlightened ; she had extended at once their fame and their arms, and gratified their love of barbarous aggression abroad, and useless shew at home. They in return believed all she did to be right, and that any deviation from her system was improper. Even Alexander, on his accession, had to assure the nation that he would tread in her steps. None of the Imperial family have resided in this palace since the horrible catastrophe alluded to.

TAURIDA PALACE, was once the residence and property of Prince Potemkin, though paid for, I believe, when erected, by the prodigal munificence, seldom backward in rewarding services, of Catharine, with whom he was a long-cherished favourite ; in the first instance as a lover, and latterly as a general and minister. It stands towards the east end of the city, and is of brick stuc-

coed, the exterior much less striking, as well as lower than any other of the palaces, but making up in extent what it is deficient in height. A minute description of this celebrated place, so famous throughout Europe for the *Arabian-night-like* entertainment, (for nothing else ever approached it in boundless magnificence and expence) given to Catharine and her court, would be needless. It embraces every thing which the wealth of Potemkin could purchase, and this is all that need be said. The celebrated hall for which it is remarkable, and where the entertainment in question was given, is, in space at least, one of the architectural wonders of Europe. Report says it was his own design; this is not improbable, as he was a man of much native talent and ingenuity, little improved by education, and in many respects, perhaps, an absolute barbarian, though certainly a magnificent one.

A double range of handsome, though plain, columns, rising to an amazing height, support the roof of this extraordinary apartment, built to all appearance more for giants than for men, but the execution of the whole is unquestionably tasteful in the highest degree. To add to its interest several statues of antiquity and merit stand between the columns. Opening from it is the winter garden of the Emperor, an immense pavilion filled with orange trees, flowers, and shrubs, blooming nearly all the year round, interspersed with charming walks, and presenting a scene of delightful recreation at all seasons, particularly in the winter; when without all is frost and snow and intense cold; while within

Soft zephyrs move, eternal summers reign,
And show'rs prolific bless the soil,

not indeed from the heavens, but from reservoirs abundantly supplied for that purpose. At this time it must present a singular spectacle of the triumph of art over natural difficulties, the climates of the pole and of the tropics separated only by a few yards!

On the other side of the hall, facing the winter-garden, is a saloon occupied by a few works of art. The pleasure, fruit, kitchen-gardens, and hot-houses, enjoy every advantage which Imperial wealth and scientific taste can bestow. Their extent is very great, laid out principally in the English style, and well watered by small canals. Here, during the short summer season of this country, the Imperial Catharine, in the last six years of her life, when the hand of age began to press upon her frame, though it could not damp her spirit, spent much of her time. I did not see the Theatre. The remaining apartments in Potemkin's time were, I understand, remarkable for their almost unjustifiable costliness; at present they are plain,

displaying nothing paltry, but nothing very remarkable, except immense quantities of glass, cut and plain, in chandeliers and mirrors.

Returning from this quarter of the city, I remarked a number of Russian workmen employed on a house of considerable magnitude, which, on enquiry, was said to be raising for a merchant, who, though born a slave, was now reputed worth £100,000. The workmen seem the most rude and uncouth creatures imaginable; many with long beards, and wrapped in sheep-skins, looked like so many Orsons just issued from the woods. They are, in fact, all from the country. Brought up to an out-door trade, they gain permission from their lord to seek out the best market for its exercise, usually Petersburg, Novgorod, Moscow, or some of the other largest cities, by paying him an extra sum for the indulgence, but before their departure frequently marry, and leave the wife behind, in the care of their father, who exercising all the marital rights, cohabits, without reproach, with his charge, and, perhaps, rears a family of beings, at once brothers and sisters or children to his absent son! This detestable custom, though checked of late years, still exists in a shameful degree. It seems so unnatural, that it must have originated from the recommendation of the lords, who count heads instead of acres, rather than from any natural perversity of proper feelings in the people: from whatever cause, however, it is an unquestionable proof of barbarism; scarcely any thing worse can be found among the untutored natives of the South Sea islands.

The most remarkable thing in the common workman or peasant, is his ingenuity. His powers of invention are far from despicable, and his capacity for imitation altogether extraordinary. Whatever he sees in the mechanical arts he can almost to a certainty copy, though to a person in the same class of life in any other country of Europe, it would offer insuperable obstacles; the faculty is, perhaps, Asiatic, for it also belongs in an eminent degree to the Chinese. No other man within our pale of civilization executes so much and so well with such inadequate means. The Russian is ignorant, in a great degree, of all those scientific inventions among us calculated to supersede or to expedite human labour; yet in the most trying difficulties he is rarely at a loss, and ultimately is sure to conquer them. The model of a flying-bridge of one arch, intended to cross the Neva, and the conveyance of the rock upon which the statue of Peter stands to the capital, besides numberless other examples of ingenuity, are proud trophies to the capacity of the most illiterate boors. The carpenter's only implement is his axe, with which he performs, with

admirable neatness and precision, all the delicate and complicated operations of his trade.

The Stone Theatre is a spacious edifice; it stands in a large convenient open area,—where all theatres ought to stand, instead of being screwed up in some obscure, intricate corner, requiring a day's search to find out, as is commonly the case in England—contiguous to the Nicolai Canal, over which is a bridge nearly opposite. The entrance is under a grand portico, supported by eight or ten handsome columns; the length of the sides of the building about 200 feet. Operas, French, German, and Russian plays are occasionally performed here, particularly the first and last, for which there are regular companies, under the direction, as is frequently the case on the continent, of government. The others receive assistance from amateurs and private performers belonging to the nobility, many of whom residing at a distance from the capital, have their own theatres and companies. In the area, the visitor's attention is attracted by four small circular iron structures, intended for large wood fires, kept here during severe frost for the warmth of the servants in waiting, who, previous to this humane measure, were sometimes frozen to death, and frequently mutilated in their extremities by frost-bites and subsequent mortification.

No performance taking place during our stay, I did not see the interior, but some of my friends who had been more fortunate, represented it as equal in size to the Opera House in London, somewhat elliptical in shape, containing four tiers of boxes, and on the whole handsomely decorated. The Emperor's box, as in all foreign theatres, is in the centre. Part of the pit is furnished with several rows of seats, offering the luxury of backs, the want of which, both in the boxes and pit of an English theatre, is a severe tax on the bodily comfort of the spectator, and has often induced a wish that I could transport myself for the evening to some more accommodating receptacle abroad. With us, where new comforts form a kind of study to much of our population, it is surprising this convenient innovation has never been attempted. The reason, doubtless, is that it would interfere with private avarice, by reducing (a little) the number of seats. Even this would be a trifling sacrifice; but I think it very practicable to be done without. A striking peculiarity is the general gloom before the curtain, from the want of sufficient lights, whether arising from penury or taste I cannot say, but suspect the latter, as I remarked the same thing some years ago in the Swedish theatres. The brilliancy thrown over the house by the contrary practice in England, was probably one reason why some of my late

companions "of the guards" were so much struck with the imposing splendour of Drury Lane.

The Carriage Mart is situated in the Grand Perspective, and called by the natives Yemskay. It presents a very large and varied assemblage of machines of all shapes, qualities, and sizes, either for the resident or traveller. Much capital and ingenuity, as well as numbers of workmen, are employed in this trade, from the prevailing rage for equipages: but the latter, though highly finished and fashionably shaped, are extremely deficient in durability. From this cause English carriages were frequently imported by those who could afford the expence, which was thrice that of the native article. At present the practice is less common, as a heavy duty protects the Petersburg manufacturer. One of the best home-made chariots costs about 800 rubles.

The Foundling Hospital is a noble edifice, containing, probably, fifty or sixty wards, in which each of the little deserted creatures has a bed to itself, with the name, supposed age, and time of its admission appended. Here all that are brought are received without enquiry, difficulty, or examination; the mother sometimes leaves a name or no name, a trinket or token of remembrance, as she pleases, but they are scarcely ever publicly reclaimed, though private recognitions, I was assured, were not unfrequent. It will be seen, therefore, that the system is totally at variance with ours. Whether it tends to immorality, is a very doubtful point, in which, as Sir Roger de Coverley observes, much may be said on both sides; but the number of children annually received, amounting sometimes to twelve or fifteen hundred, argues little for general morals. On the other hand, few instances of child-murder are known. Human nature also, it must be observed, in the indulgence of its passions seldom looks to remote consequences; and probably the last thing a young woman thinks of, when overcome by criminal love, is the resource of the foundling hospital for her probable offspring.

The boys are brought up to various trades, and are generally remarked for industry and sobriety, many being the best workmen in the city, in time acquiring wealth and respectability. The same thing I believe is common in London, as if providence made up by its protection for the neglect of the unnatural parents. For the girls it is more difficult to find employment. All the usual resources, however, for female skill and talent are put in requisition, zealously and effectually supported by their "good mother," as she is continually termed, the Empress Dowager, who bears the character of being one of the best women in her son's dominions.

Another establishment of her's which may be termed a national

blessing to the sex of her country, is the Convent for Young Gentlewomen, situated towards the east end of the city, an old (if any thing can be called old here which can count little more than a century) and capacious building, or collection of buildings, once occupied by a monastic order. Into the interior of this institution, of which the Empress herself occasionally condescends to become lady abbess in propria persona, I did not enter, application for this purpose being made too late to wait for the necessary permission, consistent with other engagements. A friend, however, who had been there ten days before, furnished me with the following particulars.

The Convent des Demoiselles offers to young women the advantages of any other convent, without its unnatural restrictions; that is, they are well educated, and may quit it and marry when they please. About four hundred of the young female nobility of the less opulent sort are received here, whose friends partly contribute to their support, besides about half the number of the daughters of citizens, both receiving that portion of instruction and accomplishments suited to their respective spheres.

The Admiralty begins at one end of Isaac's Place on the bank of the river, and extends over a considerable space of ground, the church facing the end of the Grand Perspective. Formerly this front was somewhat neglected and mean; at present, though not quite finished, it is grand and imposing in the extreme, fit for the first, instead of the fourth, maritime state in Europe, and altogether worthy of a city of palaces and splendid public works. This whole division of Petersburg takes the name of the Admiralty quarter.

Here are arranged houses of all kinds for the reception of each species of stores. Here, likewise, ships are built nearly of the largest size, excepting, I believe, three-deckers, which, the Neva being otherwise too shallow, are obliged to be floated down to Cronstadt by means of enormous wooden machines named camels. To do this successfully is the ne plus ultra of scientific knowledge and practical maritime skill. We have nothing of the kind in England. A Frenchman, I think, suggested the scheme to Peter the Great. The camels being brought to the sides of the vessel intended to be removed, are by artificial means depressed in the water, and placed under her bottom, when the pressure being removed, their natural buoyancy acting on the frame of the ship, raises her along with themselves sufficiently high to pass over the shallows of the river. This operation is one of great labour in addition to its skill.

Crossing the water to the Vassili-Ostroff quarter, we plunged at once into the region of traffic, the custom-house, exchange, and hard by, the warehouses for receiving the principal native com-

modities previous to being shipped off for more southern shores. On the other, or Admiralty side, scarcely any of the bustle of commerce is observed; the merchants reside and have their counting-houses there; but a clerk, or two, transact the business on the opposite shore, and whom they may almost overlook from their parlour windows.

It is remarkable, that the trade of this city is one almost entirely, of commission. Commercial men are more factors than what we commonly call merchants; to whom the Russian traders from all parts of the empire resort at stated seasons of the year, purchasing principally on credit, and being often paid for their own goods in advance, on some recommendation of established character, or other security; and this honorable compact is not often violated. About seven-tenths of the principal foreign mercantile houses, and the main trade, it must be observed, rests in their hands, are English; the others composed of all the nations of Europe. The internal trade of the country is solely in the hands of the native merchants, who, by means of sledges, water-conveyance, and caravans, circulate our commodities to the frontiers of China.

Some of the produce of the latter country, notwithstanding the immense distance of land-carriage, is procured better and cheaper in Petersburg than in any other capital of Europe. What will particularly delight an Englishman is the luxury of good tea, that article of supreme enjoyment to the softer sex, to the sober, and to the studious man, who is often, in the words of Samuel Johnson, "in that article a hardened sinner, who has for years diluted his meals with the infusion of that fascinating plant whose tea-kettle has had no time to cool; who has with tea solaced the midnight hour, and with tea welcomed the morning." Foreigners universally remark, that in no part of Europe do they drink such bad tea as in London, though the great emporium and second birth-place of the article. The price given for that which is commonly consumed in most families in the Russian Capital is about twelve shillings, English, per pound.

For the protection and encouragement of trade and its professors there are several guilds here, or incorporations for the enrolment of those who choose to become members, by paying a certain sum, and who have, in return, some peculiar privileges. There is likewise another regulation, rather more fettering to the freedom of commercial intercourse, though no doubt easily surmounted by that ingenuity which has so repeatedly overcome obstacles of a much greater description. This is a species of security, or obligation, required by the Government, that those

who make fortunes in Russia, shall not remove to another country to spend them; the particulars, however, I did not learn.

Provisions and some other articles of primary necessity, in the markets, are moderate in price, though living is, on the whole; as already observed, dear. The Vassili-Ostroff has some very good markets; in the winter, I understand, these are often a place of resort for all classes of people, desirous to observe all the fresh arrivals, devoted to the table, which this season exhibits. The meat is particularly remarkable; a bullock, perhaps, being killed a thousand miles off, and brought hither, frozen as hard as the pavement, to be sold, displaying, when cut up with the hatchet, the brittleness of glass. Off the Perspective are likewise several depôts for game, poultry, fruit, and a variety of other things, fitted for the immediate consumption of the table. Some of the finest southern fruits particularly attracted our attention.

With respect to the police, I must confess there was some room for Captain R——'s remarks upon the superiority of this department of internal government in this country to that of our own. The city is divided into several quarters, each under several chief officers, under whom again are from fifty to eighty or ninety men, forming, in the whole, a nightly guard of about 600 armed men, supported by patrolling parties of Cossacks, in a capital little more than a fourth part as populous as London. Scarcely such a thing as a robbery by violence is known. The presence of a stranger is soon public, for every house-keeper is obliged to give an account of all new-comers who sleep at his house; while those who reside here for some time are obliged to advertise their departure in the gazette; thus forming an admirable security to the trading part of the community against swindlers.

Whatever be the cause, whether from a naturally good disposition, from the fear of punishment, from an effective system of prevention, or from being as yet ignorant of the baneful effects of general luxury, the mass of people are remarkably free from crime.

The Russians have a great aversion to the punishment of death; for which, the Empress Elizabeth (I believe) introduced more generally the practice of knouting. Even the appearance of blood in two boors fighting, stops the combat immediately, and he who shews this mark of his adversary's prowess commonly comes off victor before the police;—a trait of character indicating little of cruelty in their composition. The knout is a dreadful instrument, with which any punishment, from simple abrasion of the skin to removing pieces of flesh, and death may be in-

flicted at the pleasure of the executioner. It is, in fact, severe flogging; the instrument being a thong of ox-hide, dry and hard, made fast to a strong wooden handle more than a foot long; it is said, that the executioner, if skilful, can penetrate at one blow to the bone; but the chief of police is present at all inflictions by this weapon; of course, the degree of severity is always proportioned to the sentence or magnitude of the offence. If any punishment can deter men from offences, it is this; yet, with all its severities, knouting is preferable to hanging.

A considerable number of minor offences are punished with fine, some of which are in England death; such as wounding and maiming; others, of a more aggravated character, by imprisonment and labour; by branding in the forehead or hand, and by banishment to Siberia. Coiners and forgers are sometimes condemned to the gold, silver, and iron-mines of the latter country for a term of years, a singular and appropriate retributive judgment for the offence.

Soon after our arrival, a grand entertainment was given at the country palace of Peterhoff, to the nobility and public, in honour of the Emperor's return. I had a ticket, but a temporary indisposition prevented my witnessing this spectacle, of which a friend, however, who was present, gave me an account. This favorite residence, about twenty miles from the Capital, near the gulph of Cronstadt, was built by a French architect for Peter the Great, with whom, as with most of his successors, it has been an admired retreat from the heat and dust of the city. Here Catharine II. resided some time as the wife of Peter III.; and from hence, she set out to Petersburg, on the astonishing enterprise of dethroning her husband. The road to it is pretty, presenting many country houses and gardens of the English merchants, laid out with taste, in the style of their country.

All the mercantile population of the Capital seemed to have congregated at Peterhoff for the evening, as well as the nobility, officers; and all foreigners of distinction, who filled the rooms to suffocation, while the populace, (who are here, as well as at home, *somebody*,) crowded the gardens to witness the illuminations, water-works, and fire-works. These were all extraordinary in their way, with which our Vauxhall, or any other public exhibition of the kind, admit of no possible comparison. The dress of the females was splendid, but remarkable, displaying a costume more nearly allied to the Asiatic than European; in addition to lofty head-dresses, many shewy colours, and abundance of rouge. A ball and splendid supper, distinguished by more, if possible, than Imperial magnificence, completed the amusements of the evening; the supper is always select. Several dwarfs, who form a species of play-thing in the houses of the principal nobility,

were in attendance upon their masters. The furniture of the rooms, particularly the chandeliers and mirrors, for which Russia is celebrated, was particularly rich and handsome, though not of recent manufacture.

Besides Peterhoff, and the princely mansions of the "Residence," the other Imperial edifices are the country palaces of Zarsko-Zelo, built by Catharine I., an immense edifice; Gatchina, erected by one of the Orloffs, but now vested in the Crown; Pauvloffsky, the work of Paul, and where he spent the principal part of his time while Grand Duke, slighted, zealously watched, denied the smallest portion of power, and the usual privileges of his rank, by his fierce and suspicious mother; Oranienbaum, built in the time of Peter the Great, and where his grandson Peter III. weakly surrendered himself to the same ambitious woman; and Strelna, on the Peterhoff road, built by a nobleman about forty years ago.

Of religion, it is scarcely necessary to say that the Greek Church constitutes the "Establishment" of Russia, of which faith the Imperial Family, and all who marry into it, must be members; but all other persons have full license to follow what mode of worship they please. Like the Roman Catholics, all classes are strict in the performance of the ceremonies of religion. Festivals are common, and Saints' Days numerous. Easter is the grand period of rejoicing, when all ranks quit their customary employments to unite in a kind of national gala, in which sports, feasting, and drinking, form the sole business of the lower orders. During this period the commonest boor enjoys a singular privilege; it is that of kissing any woman he meets, not excepting the Empress herself, provided he first presents an egg, which she is expected to return. The custom is religious, but of its particular origin I am not aware.

We had a Papa, (the name of the secular priests,) on board the ship I was in, and service was frequently performed; but excepting, at these times, he was so constantly buried in the recesses of the cock-pit that I scarcely saw him twice. His beard was of no common length, a black close cap covered his head, and a cloak of the same colour and materials, resembling coarse calico, enveloped him from the neck to the ankles.

The fervency of devotion in all is particularly striking to a Briton, who remembers the cold, unimpassioned manner characterising public worship in his own country; if the heart, however, be right, the manner is nothing. The responses were loud, frequent, and general, accompanied by bowing, or partial prostration, towards where the Papa officiated, behind whom hung a figure of the Virgin, against the partition of the ward-room, which was never removed during the voyage. In making the sign of

the cross, they touch the forehead, breast, and right and left shoulders. Unlike the Roman Catholics, though so much resembling them in other points, the Papa is allowed to marry once, but not oftener; the monks, of course, never.

Unlike, also, the persecuting tenets and practice of the Roman Catholics, all religions are tolerated, and permitted the free and unmolested exercise of their rites. Many of the different christian sects have handsome places for public worship in some of the principal streets, instead of resorting to holes and corners, or being hunted like wild beasts, as in the bigoted countries of Spain, Portugal, and Italy. A difference of religion forms no ground here for exclusion from offices of trust and emolument. It is said, that a Bishop, in the confidence of Peter the Great, once proposed the contrary of this to his master, who, too wise to be guilty of such an absurdity in an infant kingdom, only replied, by the question, "Do you wish me to cut off my right arm?"

A traveller returning from another country to his own, is commonly anxious to bring a witness of the course of his travels, in a present to the "better sex" of his acquaintance, who are, usually, not a little eager after any thing "from abroad." Knowing this, from repeated experience, I bent my way to a repository for furs, and was rather surprised to find in the chosen region of this comfortable article of warm clothing they were comparatively high in price; as dear indeed, in some respects, (as the vender very honestly assured me,) as in London. The assortment, however, was well worth looking at, for its beauty and variety, nor could I quit it empty-handed.

The immense distance which this valuable commodity has to travel over land, the increasing difficulty of procuring it, the general taste for it as an article of dress, and the great demand also by the Chinese, are the reasons assigned for the advance, in some instances exorbitant, of value. Many of the young nobility, in winter, wear fur pelisses, valued at four and five hundred pounds sterling. The famous Prince Potemkin is said to have worn one worth £5000. This is what some of the anti-sumptuaries would term, "carrying a fortune on your back." A few species of furs are so scarce as to be reserved for the use of the Imperial Family.

The skins, for which this country is famous, form a very beautiful article; I never saw any thing of the kind finer; the favorite colours are red, green, purple, yellow; and ladies, who delight in forming their own various little nick-nacks, prize them highly. Down, for making tippets, is likewise plentiful and cheap. A friend of mine, somewhat of an epicure in the article of ease, was provident enough to purchase sufficient to stuff a couch of this luxurious produce; but, on examining it in England,

found his bargain bore the usual traces of Russian ingenuity, the packages being half filled with heterogeneous matters.

The usual mode of salutation among the natives is kissing, which immediately strikes a stranger's attention; the men embrace, and salute the cheek, as before observed, a custom shocking in our eyes, particularly between two fellows with beards half as long as my arm. All ranks and ages go through this ceremony whenever they meet; after a short absence. Between the sexes the same mode of recognition prevails. The gentleman commonly kisses the lady's hand, where they are acquainted; the lady salutes, in return, the gentleman's cheek; and as the operation requires both grace and dexterity to be done with due delicacy, kissing, in this country, may be said to be reduced to an art.

Beards are another striking feature in which the low Russian differs from all the peasantry of Europe. But what is, perhaps, still more remarkable, the higher class abhor the appendage, while the boor prizes it above almost any thing else he is permitted to enjoy, and would almost refuse personal freedom, if purchased by the amputation of the beard. Such an utter variance of feeling, in the same country, is difficult to explain. On entering the army, however, the boor must submit this long-loved and valued ornament of his countenance to the scythe of the barber, which is said to be one reason why this class have, in general, an aversion to the army; so that a levy for this purpose upon the different estates is not always executed without some confusion and ill-will.

Their pay, when compelled to desert their native village for the life of a soldier, is extremely small, (about eighteen-pence, English, per month,) besides rations and clothing; and when once drawn for this mode of life, they must serve twenty, or twenty-five years, before being permitted to retire. Whether their late advance towards the south of Europe, as it has made them more knowing in the superior advantages enjoyed by most other of the continental military, will better their condition, I know not, but it is very probable. The pay of a colonel is about £200 per annum; of a captain, under £100, and the other ranks in proportion. Foreigners, therefore, may enter this service, for want of other employment, or for the sake of rank, but it cannot be for the pecuniary advantages. Neither in the regiments of the line, are the junior officers (lieutenants and ensigns) always treated with that consideration they receive in other services.

With respect to literature, Russia is a thorough Bœotia, being far, very far behind her other European brethren, but it must be confessed that the press is much restricted, and wherever

this is the case, thought itself must unavoidably be controlled. Under Paul the restrictions were most rigorous, indeed altogether unjustifiable, and at present are still severe. All books written or imported become subjected to licensers, who are commonly very ignorant, and who to make certain of excluding every thing dangerous, scarcely admit any thing! A native Russian book is in fact a kind of wonder in literature. Captain Krusenstern's voyage round the world, though I believe published in German, is very respectably written. So is Captain Lisiansky's, his companion, who on arriving near the North West coast of America, took a different route. Nicholas Karamsin's travels have amused the Russians, but not much instructed them. His account of England is a mass of errors and prejudices, one of which is, that we are a nation of cannibals, who devour raw meat like dogs, and that from this source is derived much of our constitutional ferocity and melancholy! Some of the officers told me they were at first considerably influenced by his representations.

The principal native poets and dramatic writers are SUMBAKOFF and LOMONOSSOFF, besides some others of more recent date, whose names I take shame to myself for not recollecting; but really where a language is so much at variance with all the other tongues of Europe, as to preclude the possibility of understanding a single word, written or spoken, curiosity is materially damped if not destroyed. Besides the transactions of the Academy of Sciences, and some few others, the principal work of a scientific nature published of late years, is the catalogue and description of all the curiosities of nature and art in the Museum of the Academy, in several volumes quarto. Many Russian manuscripts, it appears, enrich its library, so many indeed as rather more than 3000, of whose subjects or qualities very little is known. There are, likewise, several in the Chinese, and some in the Turkish character, collected principally on the borders of the empire during the reign of Catharine II. She likewise purchased the libraries and MSS. of Voltaire, Diderot, La Harpe, Helvetius, and some others of the French literati, whom affecting to admire while living, she thought it desirable thus to honour when dead. But in securing their books, she wisely took care to permit no importation of their principles, at least of the political sort; of their obscenity, blasphemy, and irreligion it is to be feared she was somewhat careless.

Since the accession of Alexander, two universities, one at Khar-koff in Lithuania, the other at Dorpat in Livonia, have been established, besides a variety of schools, lectureships, and institutions civil and military, for the instruction of youth; but these unfortunately are frequently deficient in good masters;

the small public salaries given in Russia forming little inducement to intelligent foreigners to settle in that country. Even in St. Petersburg tolerable tutors are difficult to be procured for private families. Clerks acquainted only with writing and arithmetic, and even cast-off travelling valets, French, German, and English, are frequently seen in this situation. In an opulent family about £150 sterling, with sometimes two or three rubles per diem table money, constitute the customary annual stipend. Many of the Courlanders, and those of other parts of the empire, who understand or speak German, proceed for education to Leipsic, Jena, and Gottingen.

Besides the blaze of palaces, mansions, churches, charitable receptacles, and repositories for the labours of art and science, there are two or three grand buildings appropriated to the instruction of youth intended for the army and navy. These are mostly of the inferior class of nobility, or in other words, gentlemen's sons. They enter at an early age, eight or nine years, and remain till arrived at fifteen or sixteen. Here the best masters in every department are provided. The round of studies embrace mathematics, military exercises, and all the modern languages. The boys do every thing by military rule; rise, parade, march to dinner, mount guard, and proceed again to rest by word of command, the drum, or the bugle. Those brought up here, however, necessarily form not a four hundredth part of the officers of the vast Russian army, the great majority of whom are extremely ignorant in every point but their immediate duties, and even in the more scientific parts of this. A friend well acquainted with both services, informs me that the Prussian officers of all classes are exceedingly superior.

A Briton in looking round this city is involuntarily astonished to find so much, in every way, done by the Sovereign and so little by the people. If a monarch could at all exist without subjects, it might well be supposed it was here, for he is ever in the eye and in the ear, is the subject of all thoughts and the theme of all tongues, while the community at large is never heard of. Ask who projected this?—the answer is, Peter.—Who founded that? Catharine. Continue the interrogatory all day and the replies are the same. Peter and Catharine, and Catharine and Peter, occasionally intermingled with the names of Elizabeth, Paul, and Alexander. But inquire for some memorial of public exertion, some splendid trace of individual spirit, some noble erection, the fruit of voluntary association and public subscription, nothing, or next to nothing, of the kind is known. A species of tacit agreement would seem to exist in the country, that the sovereign alone should have the merit of doing all that is done, and that no individual or body of men

ought to think of wresting from him the honour and applause of the measure. Or rather, perhaps, we may consider it merely the effect of the want of that manly independence, enterprize, liberality, and munificent public spirit, characteristic of countries where constitutional freedom is enjoyed, and which exalting the private man in his own estimation, persuades him that his interest in his native land is as strong, and his attachment to it as powerful, as that of the monarch to whom his devotion and allegiance are due.

Petersburg is likewise singularly deficient in that animating moral bustle belonging to some other capitals, forming in Paris the pursuit of pleasure, in London of commerce and politics. No public feelings are elicited, no public assemblages encouraged, except on religious festivals, no public discussion permitted or thought of, even for the most harmless purposes. The dethronement of a sovereign or the overturning of a dresky are equally matters on which a Russian is constitutionally silent, well aware that silence is a virtue seldom injurious to him who can practise it. An Englishman will very naturally think such a place truly miserable; but a native has no such idea. He contentedly follows his daily avocations, conceiving political affairs to fall properly under other and higher cognizance, and gives to the practice of the government the full weight of his opinion; for here, as in all other countries, the Sovereign rules but by the general feeling, such as it is, from the controul of which no despotism, however great, is exempted. In this point we are continually liable to err; we habitually take our own as the standard of other nations, and think them happy or otherwise according as they come up to our guage, without remembering that the throne of Constantinople itself is only supported by the general approval of its subjects.

It would be presumption to judge of the several estimates of the character of the people in minute and particular points from the little time afforded me for observation. But there are general outlines worth remarking, always more or less obvious in national peculiarities, which frequently convey considerable information.

The general polish of manners among the higher class, and a certain attentive good breeding, not always common among ourselves, immediately strike the notice of a stranger. It is true, indeed, that people of rank are said to be the same in all countries; and this may hold true in externals; but in the essentials of knowledge, in acquaintance with the world at large, in extended views, and sometimes even in common information, those of Russia are very deficient. Like artificial diamonds the surface is sufficiently brilliant, but there is a want of substance and

of intrinsic value beneath. They bear many of the leading features of the Asiatic;—a certain courteousness of manners and occasional ardour of attachment, blended with little stability of temperament, a fondness for novelty, few fixed principles of any kind, little decorum on the score of morals, and a want of that strict and sensitive tie we denominate honour. Many illustrious exceptions of course occur among the travelled class; but nine-tenths of the order never emerge beyond the atmospheres of Moscow and St. Petersburg.

The barbaric splendour displayed in their style of living, inhabiting mansions superior to our palaces, filled with every species of luxury, attended by hundreds of servants (or slaves), amused by fools and dwarfs, administered to by dependants and flatterers, and powerful almost as petty sovereigns, present other Asiatic resemblances. The younger and poorer branches deign only to look up for employment to the army or the state; and the vast extent of both commonly offers them subsistence, but seldom perhaps wealth.

The inferior orders are distinguished by a plodding industry and acuteness in pecuniary matters, not exceeded by any people in the world; the spirit of extortion and accumulation is in fact so general, as to be almost a national peculiarity, for even Potemkin himself, with riches nearly boundless, was as often mean as he was at other periods gorgeously magnificent. No people seem better suited to the pursuits of commerce. Time, more freedom of action, and greater general knowledge are necessary to fit them for other callings. Patience, forbearance, and good-nature are virtues belonging to the lower Russian, of which he rarely loses the sense except from extreme injustice or oppression. Want of cleanliness and an irresistible desire for “strong potations” are equally characteristic of his nature. Ability to support privations under which any other man would sink, added to implicit obedience and fidelity to his leader, will ever render him infinitely the best soldier in Europe for hard service; nor is his courage less constitutional than his hardihood. Female honour is not such a virtue among them as it ought to be; but this and other faults arise doubtless from their slavery, which has always a tendency to lower the standard of morals in this as well as in other points. Escaped from barbarism, however, but one century, and known to us only since the reign of our Elizabeth, a proper national character can scarcely be said to be definitively established; but whenever the progress of knowledge, and some alterations in the administration of the government and condition of the people are permitted to take place, I have little doubt it will be of the most favourable description.

On our return to Cronstadt, understanding the Emperor intended to visit the fleet at that port, we did not wish to omit

seeing this ceremony, and therefore quitted Petersburg leaving many objects of curiosity unvisited.—The Emperor, as the head of a great military nation should be, having nothing of the sluggard in his composition, “took the field” at an early hour. A little before ten o’clock the guns of the batteries of Cronstadt and the fleet pouring peals through the deafened ear, and a flotilla of boats being in motion, announced his approach. In a few minutes more, attended by several naval and military officers, he came on board our frigate, previous to visiting his own ships, a mark of distinction of which the Russian officers were not a little jealous.—All the honours due to royalty were of course duly paid; and the officers being drawn up in form on the quarter-deck, we had the honour of being introduced to the magnanimous Autocrat of all the Russias, who had previously expressed his satisfaction of the care and attention shewn to the health and comforts of the crews of his fleet. He remained on board about a quarter of an hour.

The person of Alexander is so well known from his stay in London, that few in the metropolis at that time were ungratified with a view of the original. He is above the middle size, of a somewhat plump and pleasing figure, his countenance rather round and highly expressive of good nature, his manners of course of the first polish, but with a winning natural affability which mere polish, without a natural bias of mind, could never give. He is between thirty-eight and thirty-nine years of age, his complexion fair, his eyes to my ken, grey, or as some say, blue, and though scarcely turned the corner of life, time has somewhat “thinned his flowing hair,” as often happens to those of light complexion, the crown being slightly bald, though the sides are bushy and matted, projecting over the ears, something in the form of what is called the yeoman crown. This fashion, copying after the Emperor, is general throughout the army and navy. Those whose vertex is well furnished by nature, press it so flatly down that scarce any is perceived here, while the sides are frizzed out immoderately. A prevailing characteristic of the Russian officers, some short time ago, was tight-bound waists, the abdomen being drawn in, in a most unmerciful and uncomfortable manner, but experience has partly corrected this error. Among the guards at least the practice was scarcely discernible. The Emperor is no pattern for this fashion.

His mental characteristics are sufficiently intelligible to all Europe. They consist not so much in extraordinary talents, which indeed seldom make a nation happy, as in a sound, sober, regular, well directed judgment, aiming at nothing striking merely because it is new; displaying no imperial tricks, no shew-off, no stage-effect, no unbounded lust of conquest, no brutal

domineering over his weaker neighbours, neither insulting his friends, nor ever behaving treacherously towards his foes. Meaning well, and wishing to see his people happy, he wisely distrusts daring and dangerous innovations, without rejecting any practicable amelioration in the laws or government of his empire.

Mild and moderate abroad, he is equally so at home, holding "the even tenor of his way," with a calmness, which would seem indifference were not its wisdom evident in the daily increasing influence and territory of Russia, without violence or aggression, which though alarming to some of her neighbours, yet gives them no just reason to quarrel with her. No sovereign has done so much for extending the power of his country with so little bustle, or so few enemies. His habits are those of a man of business. He commonly rises early, takes coffee soon afterwards, inspects public documents set apart for his signature or approval, and about ten o'clock proceeds to the parade, which often occupies considerable time from the minuteness with which he examines the men. After this, when business is to be transacted, he repairs to the council, where no affair of importance is debated or determined upon without his being present. An early dinner, characterized by temperance, succeeds, followed sometimes by an hour or two's repose. The evening is devoted to a drive, to occasional promenading, to games of amusement, conversation, and the society of particular friends.

His partialities, as might be expected from the head of a military nation, are strongly military. He has been from infancy accustomed to the review and parade, to the sash, sword, and feather; the army is at once his pride, and, from the nature of the government, his chief dependence and support in case of emergency. Without being the champion of unjust or unnecessary war, he delights in the "pride, pomp and circumstance" of the camp, attending his large armies commonly in person, but without the vanity of taking the command from more experienced officers, though his talents in this way are unquestionably considerable. Napoleon was once the idol of his admiration. He confessed lately, that "he had been often deceived by his professions, but seldom by his actions." "Had the man possessed a little more honour or principle," said his Majesty lately, "he would, in spite of us, always have possessed Europe." On another occasion he remarked, with that point which frequently characterizes his conversation, "that Bonaparte was unquestionably a most extraordinary character—but he would have been a much greater man had he only been something less."

Among the other characteristics of the Emperor is a total neglect of ceremony, except on state occasions, in proceeding through his capital. Frequently he has been seen driving about

in a plain English chariot, or curricie, sometimes on a drosky, little distinguished from the common class, and not unfrequently on foot, attended only by a servant or two, or perhaps an officer. In this way he is often recognized where least expected; and though not desirous of being noticed, the affections of the people, with whom he is literally an idol, are too powerful to restrain themselves in the usual tokens of respect. Before his person became so well known in the capital, several whimsical adventures occurred, scarcely less singular than some of those which are related of the Caliphs of Bagdad, or the Viziers of Constantinople, displaying in all, an inexhaustible fund of good nature. More than once, towards the dusk of the evening he has been in custody of the police, for not giving an account of himself. On one occasion it is said, he was stopped on a bridge, over one of the canals, by a refractory Isvotschik, or drosky-driver, who half-tipsey, had placed his vehicle in such a position, as to obstruct the passage, and the Emperor sat with exemplary patience for half an hour, using only the rhetoric of persuasion, before the son of the whip would permit him to pass. At another time while on foot, with a military companion, a drunken boor stumbled against them so violently, as almost to destroy the equilibrium of both, and in framing some apology, had nearly repeated the offence. The officer thinking the insult intentional, drew his sword;—"Let him alone," said the Emperor, with his usual jocular humour, "You see that he is just sober enough to know that he's drunk."—He frequently visits some of the principal merchants to breakfast, with little or no ceremony. The English are thus frequently honoured. His kindness and condescension make him so universally beloved, by foreigners as well as natives, that were he not a monarch, attachments to whom are always suspicious in the eyes of the world, few men would have more personal friends.

The morals of the court were so indifferent during the late reigns, that we can scarcely feel surprised, when accusations of indiscriminate gallantry are laid to his charge. Some of his favourites are publicly mentioned, while many others are conjectured; and even scandal insinuates, that a few of his private visits are not prompted by the purest motives, but these things are always exaggerated. Whether this be or be not the case,* it may be safely asserted, that few of his nobility preserve public appearances, or are in fact so correct as himself. The Empress is a charming woman, her features handsome and

* While in this country, the charms of English women had so powerful an effect on His Imperial Majesty, that it is said an illustrious personage jocularly termed him the "Cytherean Dandy."

regular, her figure somewhat below the middle size, and her manners, it is said, highly attractive. The attachment of her august partner, is undoubted, and has been repeatedly expressed in the tenderest manner. Towards the Empress Dowager, his regard is ardent, devoted, and respectful in the highest degree, as the acknowledged virtues and exemplary conduct of this illustrious female and mother deserve; and a good son is seldom a bad husband.

Towards England and Englishmen he has always displayed much partiality, having been accustomed to the society of several of our nation from his youth. The war scarcely interrupted this feeling, hated heartily as it was by the nation, and little relished by himself. It was, in fact, but a burst of spleen at first, and hardly ever amounted to anger. His late visit, it is understood, has much increased the kinder feelings towards us, mixed with admiration at the beauty of the country, much surprise at our political system and institutions, great wonder at the spirit and apparent importance of the lower order of people, and astonishment at the practical proofs of general wealth. A handsome equipage and liveries passing one day, he asked whose it was, and expressed no little amazement when informed there were thousands such in the streets of London, whom nobody knew beyond the immediate circle of their friends. The number of public buildings, charities, and noble offices of trading companies, formed another subject of great interest,—not for their architecture, for this, compared with his own, is contemptible; but for the sums received and expended in their support, all proceeding, not from the crown as in Russia, but from the purses of private individuals. Much of this he already knew from description; but the striking realities presented at once to the eye, made a ten-fold impression; and the contrast became greater on recollecting, that in his own territories, the mercantile character was utterly despised. Slaves, or the descendants of slaves, only practised it; and with such the nobility or their connections would not associate, much less adopt any part of their calling. Even the learned professions were nearly as despicable, while in England they claimed wealth, honours, and precedence at court over that military costume which alone gave the wearer a title to the character of a gentleman in his own. War, he knew, formed the sole destination of the higher class in his empire. In England the pursuits of war, commerce, agriculture, manufactures, science, and the arts, seemed so equally divided between all, and each so superior in its way, as to be difficult to tell which preponderates in importance.

Yet it was not in this visit he first became acquainted with the fructuous qualities of commerce. Conscious of its tendency to

enrich and civilize every country where it takes root, it has occupied much of his attention since the year 1805, and perhaps few monarchs understand the subject better. Certainly no Russian sovereign has done so much for its credit and increase; studying at the same time to throw the main branches from the hands of foreigners into those of his own subjects, hitherto, from the shackles imposed by the war, with indifferent success, but eventually by skill and the continuance of peace, likely to produce the fullest effect. With the same view he has tried to remove the prejudices of the nobility against the trading character, by associating with the merchants himself. So long ago as the commencement of the war with England, it is said that he used to give them special dinners, as a mark of his high consideration. His friendly visits are intended for the same purpose. His notice and invitations to them are marked and distinguished. His approbation and encouragement sure to any new and promising branch of traffic or manufacture. England will no doubt in time suffer from this uncommon activity; but where his own subjects gain, who else, even while they lose, shall presume to condemn.

The interior administration of his vast Empire is characterized by the same prudence and caution conspicuous elsewhere. Mildness and firmness constitute the leading features. There is no tyranny in the exercise of power, and no improper relaxation. *Suaviter in modo, sed fortiter in re*, may be taken as the government motto. If any thing could make us submit to arbitrary authority, it would be when administered by such a man. Some wild theorists, however, unacquainted with human nature and with Russia, have presumed to condemn him, for not giving freedom to the people from the vassalage of their lords. The truth however is, a decree to this effect would be in itself not only arbitrary in the extreme, and dangerous to his own authority and perhaps existence, but utterly subversive of those rights, of which we are so justly tenacious in England, the rights of property, in addition to throwing the whole country into inextricable confusion. It is true, a pecuniary interest in human beings, is unquestionably at variance with religion, propriety, and morals, besides being sure to bring down vehement animadversion on the head of the possessor. Here, however, the practice has existed beyond the æra of record or of tradition; its authority has never been questioned; successive ages have sanctified the right; and time alone can produce an amelioration by gradual and quiet, not by sudden or violent means. Great and numerous difficulties, in the opinions of the wisest people here, environ the subject, and of these the Emperor is fully aware. His regrets that he cannot do more are well known; however all

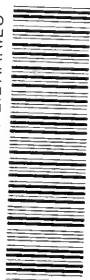
the estates which he can either influence or purchase have their peasantry immediately clothed with the enviable distinction of freemen. Serious and leading defects also in the general code of laws of the country are equally striking, though perhaps more easy of remedy ; yet where a certain system has borne prescriptive sway since before the origin of christianity itself, total alterations must not be lightly or quickly made. Neither is every man, though gifted with superior talents, born to be a legislator for his country.

In promoting the substantial interests and happiness of his people, it is perfectly understood that the Emperor is no admirer of those theoretical schemes of political perfectibility and unlimited extension of popular rights, which characterize the age. A considerable change of opinion in this point is attributed to this august personage. Nor is it to be wondered at. Men less interested than him in the preservation of public order, have both in our own country and other parts of Europe experienced and confessed similar variations of sentiment. But in a sovereign who must naturally lose what his subjects gain in the article of authority, such changes are sufficiently excuseable, particularly where he is conscious of never exerting it to their injury, but always for their advantage. In Russia the nation at large may be safely pronounced unfit to receive any material portion of political power. It has not, and (unlike most other nations of Europe) never had, any constitutional rights. Society itself is there but in its infancy ; and the horn-book of political knowledge remains yet to be learnt. Conscious of the dangers attending popular innovation in such a community, the Emperor is induced to dread them among others, who are, perhaps, more enlightened, and certainly better prepared for the measure.

Quitting Cronstadt, three days carried the ship out of the Gulph of Finland and a few more brought us opposite Copenhagen. Passing the Sound, Cronenburg Castle appeared on the left, once formidable in idea, but no sooner touched by the Ithuriel spear of a British man of war, than sinking into insignificance. Nelson was an enchanter that broke all spells opposed to him. Nothing particular occurred in the passage across the North Sea ; and in about three weeks we again touched English ground by disembarking at Deal.

Syracuse N. Y.
PAT. JAN. 21, 1908

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